



Gleanings From

School-Life Experience











HINTS  
TO  
COMMON SCHOOL TEACHERS,  
PARENTS AND PUPILS;  
OR  
GLEANINGS FROM  
SCHOOL-LIFE EXPERIENCE.

BY  
HIRAM ORCUTT, A. M.,  
PRINCIPAL OF NORTH GRANVILLE LADIES' SEMINARY.

*"Teaching a Science—The Teacher an Artist."*

REVISED EDITION.

RUTLAND:  
GEO. A. TUTTLE & COMPANY.  
BROWN, TAGGARD & CHASE, BOSTON.

1859.

LB1037  
.072

Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1859, by  
HIRAM ORCUTT,  
In the Clerk's office of the District court for the Northern District  
of New York.

1417ES  
5 MAR 46



TO  
THE HUNDREDS OF HIS PUPILS,

WHO, AS PRACTICAL TEACHERS, HAVE DONE HONOR  
TO THE PROFESSION,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND FORMER  
TEACHER—THE AUTHOR.

## PREFACE.

THIS little book had its origin in EXPERIENCE. It was not, originally, written with a view to publication but for the benefit of the Author's Normal Classes. The substance of these chapters has been recently published in the form of newspaper articles for the benefit of those employed in Teaching District Schools in this vicinity. It is now republished in a more permanent form, by the solicitation of Teachers and friends, and with the hope of aiding the less experienced in the arduous and noble work of school-keeping. The Author does not aim to discuss, at length, the subjects here treated, but to present to the reader just what the title page indicates, some "Gleanings" from twenty years' experience, or practical "Hints" as to the management and instruction of "Common Schools," and the duties of Teachers, Parents and Pupils.

NORTH GRANVILLE, N. Y., Aug. 15, 1858.

## PREFACE TO THE ENLARGED EDITION.

A NEW edition of the "Gleanings" has been called for much earlier than was expected; yet, a revision is undertaken with cheerfulness and hope, in view of the marked favor with which the first edition has been received. The Author acknowledges that the book was too small to allow him to do justice to the important subjects treated; too small for the price which the Publishers were obliged to charge for it. To remove these objections, the work has been enlarged *one-half*—from 72 to 144 pages—and a large edition is published. Though containing twice as much reading matter, it will be sold for the same. The book has been rewritten and one entirely new chapter (upon Study and Recitation) inserted, which, it is believed, will greatly enhance its value.

The Author has not departed from his original plan in the present edition; the book will still be found concise and eminently practical, containing

more of thought than discussion, more of suggestion than argument. The "Hints" are designed for three distinct classes, viz.: *Teachers, Parents* and *Pupils*, yet all are inclosed in one volume. The whole book is intended for *each* class, and is as appropriate and important for one as the other. Each should know all that has been said to the others, as their relations are mutual and their interests inseparable.

Grateful for the favor shown his former efforts, the Author again submits this little volume to those for whom it was written, anxious only that it may aid in promoting the cause of Common School Education.

The Author exceedingly regrets to notice that a few errors remain in the book uncorrected.

MARCH 1, 1859.

# CONTENTS.

## I.

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER'S WORK, - - | 9 |
|---------------------------------------|---|

## II.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| HIS NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS, - - - - - | 18 |
|---|----|

## III.

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, - - - - - | 33 |
|------------------------------|----|

## IV.

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| SCHOOL DISCIPLINE, - - - - - | 50 |
|------------------------------|----|

## V.

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| SCHOOL INSTRUCTION, - - - - - | 64 |
|-------------------------------|----|

## VI.

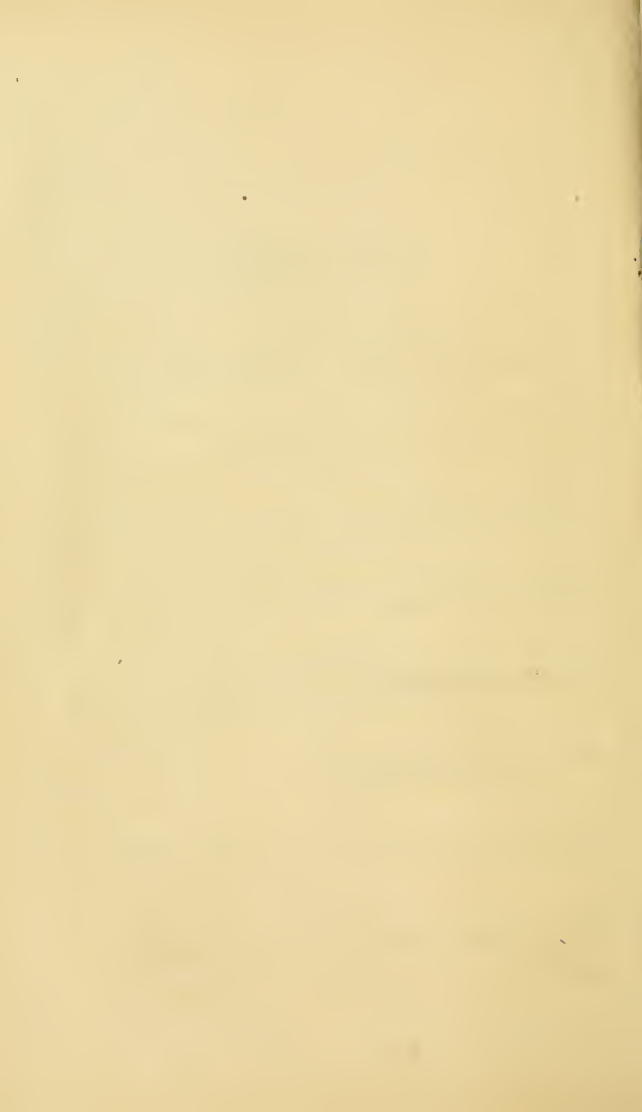
|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| STUDY AND RECITATION, - - - - - | 89 |
|---------------------------------|----|

## VII.

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| CONCLUDING REMARKS TO TEACHERS, - - - | 119 |
|---------------------------------------|-----|

## VIII.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| OUR "COMMON SCHOOLS,"—TO PARENTS AND<br>PUPILS, - - - - - | 139 |
|---|-----|



## I.

### IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS' WORK.

THE great Sculptor, Hiram Powers, has just completed the bust of the distinguished Edward Everett, which is said to be unsurpassed by any artist, either in ancient or modern times. Yet, how much greater the work and more distinguished the artist who aided in forming the mind and character of that same Everett, now acknowledged to be the greatest living orator. When but ten years old, young Everett sat before Daniel Webster and received from him, as his teacher, the rudiments of education. More than half a century afterwards, when both teacher and pupil had attained the most distinguished honors and the highest position among their fellow men, the one having passed off the stage of life, leaving the other without a living superior, the pupil sat for his bust before the artist Powers.

And to whom shall we award the praise? To the Artist or the Teacher? to the distinguished Powers, or the immortal Webster and his co-laborers in the work of education? We may admire the genius and skill of him who has taken the rude block of marble, cold from the quarry, and converted it into an almost breathing statue. Ages will venerate him; time will pay him a tribute of respect; poesy will proudly rear a tablet to his memory, and history will adorn her pages with his eulogy.

The Painter, who represents on canvas the beautiful creation of his own imagination, or the striking events of story, rears a monument to his own memory that will long endure and continue to rise in loftier majesty and more fit proportions, from generation to generation.

Still, how insignificant the work of the Artist when compared with that of the true Teacher. The one works upon stone or the canvas, the other upon the undying spirit; the one creates the form and figure of the lifeless body, the other moulds the living character of the hero,



statesman and sage. The Artist attracts attention as a man of genius, and his works are admired as evidence of inimitable skill ; but the memory of the faithful Teacher will be cherished with gratitude when all earthly distinctions shall be forgotten, and the results of his labors will endure forever.

*His* material is no rude earthly substance to be fashioned by the chisel, or made to glow with animation by the pencil. It is his to mould the MIND, that emanation from Deity which, when developed, constitutes the intellect, the affections and the will ; which denies relationship to any thing earthly, and claims kindred with the skies, and which, when all material forms shall decay, will continue to live and to glow in the brightness of progressive immortality. What then is the Sculptor's or Painter's art compared with his ? It is the Teacher's business to form the intellect, not to fashion a stone ; to guide the affections, not the pencil ; to stimulate conscience and give energy to will, not merely to make the lifeless eye speak in a group of figures, or the graces

sit enthroned on a marble brow. In a word, it is his to *educate* the human soul and fit it for its noble designs and destiny. From the canvas upon which he paints, no impression can be erased; good or evil, truth or error, virtue or vice, it must ever remain. How important then the Teacher's work!

The Warrior, the Statesman and the Scholar, claim also a share of the world's homage. And may we erect triumphal arches to our own Washington, who led our armies victorious over the slaughtered hosts of their enemies, and afterwards presided in our public Councils? May we institute a great national festival, whose annual return is celebrated by bells, bonfires, illuminations and public rejoicings in view of the great work which our hero and statesman has accomplished? May we purchase "Mount Vernon," that the great name of the "Father of our Country," may be forever associated with the home of his manhood, and that a mighty Nation may water his tomb with their grateful tears through all coming time? It is well to do

so. But what avail the victories of our revolution or our dear bought freedom? What avail to rear monuments and consecrate public grounds to perpetuate the memory of our great national struggle and of the warriors and statesmen whom we delight to honor, if the *School* be not established and the *Teacher* employed to prepare the people for the enjoyment and preservation of our liberties? Self-government is not possible without intelligence and virtue. Hence, great statesmen and victorious armies are of little value in any country, without efficient Teachers. Indeed, the Teacher has ever been the patron of society. To him has been committed the work of training the mind and forming the character of each generation of American citizens, and at a period when the most susceptible of durable impressions. And our future citizens and rulers are now under his care and instruction. Their moral and intellectual character must be moulded chiefly by his hand. To our Common Schools, we must look for those who will soon be called upon to manage the

affairs of families, to transact the business of town and state, to fill the vacated Bench of Justice, to sit in the Halls of Legislation, and to direct and control the Church of God.

Upon the character of our *Schools* and *Teachers*, therefore, depends the weal or woe of unborn millions ; the prosperity or downfall of our boasted Institutions.

And if, as some one has told us, "to educate a child perfectly requires profounder thought, greater wisdom than to conquer an Empire or govern a State," what place among the honored of our nation and the benefactors of our race, shall we assign to the efficient Teacher? May the profound scholar, who retires from the strifes and conflicts of life and spends his strength for the public weal, win from us his mead of praise? And shall we not honor him also who consecrates himself to the great work of cultivating *mind* and training American citizens for their peculiar duties and responsibilities?

The late Dr. Channing once said, "One of the surest signs of the regeneration of society

will be the elevation of the art of teaching to the highest rank in the community. When a people shall learn that its greatest benefactors and most important members are men devoted to the liberal instruction of all its classes, to the work of raising to life its buried intellect, it will have opened to itself the path of true glory. Socrates is now regarded the greatest man in an age of great men. *To teach, whether by word or action, is the greatest function on earth."*

There is another view of our subject which magnifies the Teacher's work still more. Teaching is the source of our most valuable attainments and greatest blessings. Who does not owe a debt of gratitude to the *Teacher*? Look on the favored portions of our country, and ask whence the general intelligence, virtue, order and happiness that characterize the people? whence these countless privileges, innumerable sources of enjoyment and thousands of smiling, happy homes that meet our eye? Do they not all emanate from our Schools? Are they not the result of Teaching?

We are accustomed to look with pride upon the noble phalanx of educated men and women who have done so much to elevate and honor our country. Our Editors, Authors, Orators and Statesmen have an imposing character and commanding influence ; our professional men are distinguished for learning, skill and ability, and many of them have gained a world wide and enduring reputation. But are not all these the workmanship of the *Teacher*? The comparative importance of the Teacher's work will be best illustrated by the following fable :

“ When Jupiter offered the prize of immortality to him who was the most useful to mankind, the court of Olympus was crowded with competitors. The warrior boasted of his patriotism, but Jupiter thundered ; the rich man boasted of his munificence, and Jupiter showed him the widow's mite ; the pontiff held up the keys of heaven, and Jupiter pushed the doors wide open ; the painter boasted of his power to give life to inanimate canvas, and Jupiter breathed aloud in derision ; the Sculptor boasted of making gods

that contended with the immortals for human homage, Jupiter frowned ; the orator boasted of his power to sway the nation with his voice, and Jupiter marshaled the obedient host of heaven with a word ; the poet spoke of his power to move even the gods by praise, Jupiter blushed ; the musician claimed to practice the only human science that had been transplanted to heaven, Jupiter hesitated ; when seeing a venerable man looking with intense interest upon the group of competitors but presenting no claims, ‘ What art thou ? ’ said the benignant monarch. ‘ Only a spectator,’ replied the gray headed sage ; ‘ all these were my pupils.’ ‘ *Crown him, crown him,*’ said Jupiter ; ‘ crown the *faithful Teacher* with immortality, and make room for him at my right hand ! ’ ”

## II.

### HIS NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS.

MORE depends upon what the Teacher *is*, than upon what he *does*. Like the poet, he is endowed by nature with the most important qualifications for his work, *nascitur non fit*. This natural talent may be cultivated but can not be created by education.

The true Teacher has a large share of common sense, or as some would call it, good judgment. This is practical wisdom—a sort of instinct as to the fitness and propriety of things. It teaches its possessor to do the right thing at the right time. It acts in the real and not in the romantic world, and adapts one to circumstances, to society and to duty.

There are many opportunities for its exercise in the school-room; many instances when the want of it imperils the Teacher, or proves his



ruin. A question of political or judicial economy is about to be settled in his little empire ; he has no time for consultation with older and more experienced teachers ; no time to read books on the “ Theory and Practice of Teaching ;” the question must be settled without delay ; the existence of his authority, and his destiny as a teacher, depends upon prompt and judicious action. Under such circumstances, sound common sense is the teacher’s only security.

The successful Teacher has an earnest devotion to his work. The employment is congenial to his tastes ; he has a natural love for the office for its own sake ; the detail of school-room life is pleasant ; intercourse with the pupils, a social and intellectual gratification ; teaching an agreeable exercise, and the consciousness of having contributed to the intellectual and moral good of the young, his ample reward. If this is not the case, if the teacher’s tastes, interests and ambition are not in his employment, no amount of talent, no intellectual attainments, can fit him to instruct and manage a school.

A cheerful and hopeful disposition is also essential to success in teaching. The radiant smile of cheerfulness is the sunlight of the school-room which diffuses itself through the atmosphere, and is reflected from every countenance. It wakes to new life the slumbering energies of the mind and creates an abiding interest in the duties and scenes of school-life. The cheerful teacher makes his pupils cheerful, but sadness and discouragement on his countenance, burden the mental atmosphere with gloom and chill the very life-blood of vigorous thought.

Hope is also an essential element in the teacher's character. He must be inspired with faith in human nature and human progress ; in the moral and intellectual capacity of his pupils ; in the power of good instruction and good example to improve and elevate the mind, and in the vast importance of his own sphere of influence in educating and forming the character of those committed to his charge. Hope built upon such faith is strong and powerful as a stimulus to efficient action.

.

A natural and earnest sympathy with the young is another valuable trait in the character of the teacher. With him life should ever be young. He must be fond of the society of children and youth ; must partake largely of their hopes, their joys and their enthusiasm, and must be sensitively alive to all that interests or troubles them. Such a teacher has a sympathy, an interest, an affection for his pupils which will create in their minds corresponding feelings, and give him power and influence over them that can be gained in no other way. He can mingle in their sports without losing his dignity or authority ; can reprove and correct them without provoking their ill will. Such a master will succeed.

Aptness to teach is also a gift of nature, still it may be improved by culture. Quickness of perception and accurate knowledge are important, but the most brilliant scholars are not, usually, the best teachers. The power to communicate and instruct so as to gain the attention and wake up the mind of the pupil, is the

indispensable gift to which we allude. This enables the teacher to adapt his instructions to the peculiarities of his pupils. Some need encouragement, others caution, and still others rebuke, according as they are timid, ambitious, or self-sufficient. Aptness to teach implies skill in the selection and use of illustration. It guides the teacher as to the amount of instruction to be given, that he may not make the task of the pupil too easy, but simply possible. In a word, it instructs him *when* to teach, *how* to teach, and *how much* to teach.

Earnestness and perseverance are among the necessary qualities in the teacher.

These qualities are indispensable to success in any department of labor. Look where you will for examples, the same truth is illustrated. The earnest man succeeds; the indolent, though possessed of more talents and greater attainments, often fails. The earnest and determined teacher not only performs much more labor in the same time, but inspires all around him with his own spirit. He infuses life and animation into the

minds of all, awakens new interest in study and exerts a commanding influence which is felt not only in the school-room, but also in the district and town where he resides. He is a living, breathing, acting spirit. Enthusiasm [*God in us*] has taken possession of his soul. He has caught the divine idea of education and feels a divine solicitude to acquit himself in a manner corresponding to the importance of his work.

His earnestness and eagerness to accomplish his object, call forth a corresponding effort. No obstacles intimidate, no difficulties discourage him ; he feels no misgivings, he knows no defeat. Such a teacher has power by his presence to create order out of confusion, and to make his school popular, profitable and successful.

The efficient teacher must have a sound and well cultivated mind.

A sound mind is not only the foundation of true manhood, but the source of all successful efforts. It is conceded that respectable talents are necessary to fit the young man for successful business, or efficiency in any one of the mechan-

ical arts or professions. For the factory, the workshop, the counting-room, we demand young persons of talent, and can less be required of those who are to occupy the important position of teachers?

And this mind must be cultivated; must acquire the power to think, to analyze and reason. An undisciplined mind is unfit to educate other minds. It cannot appreciate the importance of systematic culture, or employ the means necessary to secure it. Without the power and habit of well regulated thought, the teacher can himself have no available knowledge; and if he had, could have no power to impart it to others. Hence, every teacher should be thoroughly disciplined by mathematical and classical study. These furnish the most direct means of securing mental discipline.

But discipline is not the only advantage derived from such studies. The study of Latin is indispensable to a thorough knowledge of the English language, and the most successful way to learn that language. To illustrate, allow any

two individuals of equal age and equal capacity to commence the study of the English language with a view to make the greatest possible attainments in two years. The one may study English grammar during the whole time, and under proper instruction ; the other may spend his first year (one-half the time allowed) in the study of Latin ; the second year he may spend in the study of English, and the latter will be the better English grammarian when the two years have expired. The study of the higher mathematics is of great service to the Common School Teacher. It adds strength and vigor to his mental powers, and affords him a knowledge of the principles necessary to explain arithmetic and the practical natural sciences.

The facts and principles of the branches to be taught must be thoroughly understood. And, if the teacher would do himself full justice, he must extend his knowledge far beyond his present necessity and requisitions. He cannot teach clearly in the twilight of his own knowledge, nor communicate more definite information than he

himself possesses. All branches of science are connected. No one branch can be properly taught and illustrated without the aid of others. With a knowledge of the lesson to be taught, merely, the teacher may be able to throw some light upon the subject before him, but it is like the light of the sun where there is no atmosphere to diffuse and reflect it—all in one direction, and *total darkness* everywhere else. The range of the teacher's studies should, therefore, be extensive, and his knowledge liberal. He should be familiar with all the principles that can aid in the explanation of the subjects to be taught. He should gather up and preserve all attainable facts and incidents to be found in the wide field of science and history. All passing events should be preserved for use in the school-room.

In a word, the teacher should be constantly *reading, observing* and *thinking*, for the benefit of his pupils and the honor of his profession.

Another desirable quality in a School-Teacher is self-respect. This implies a consciousness of integrity which makes one strong in the discharge



of his duties ; it gives its possessor noble aims and honorable motives, and enables him to hold a commanding position among his pupils, and to exert a healthful influence over them. Self-respect also implies self-reliance, or a confidence in one's own ability and qualifications for his office. Such a teacher is not ostentatious, but simply self-confident. Difficulties do not intimidate nor disturb him, because he feels himself adequate to surmount them. He rightly judges himself worthy of his own confidence and esteem, and is sure to gain the respect and confidence of his pupils, so necessary to his success and usefulness.

Self-respect is intimately connected with self-control. This, also, is essential to success in school-keeping. Without it, a master is like a ship without a helm. In calm weather he may experience no serious difficulty, but when the storm comes and the winds blow, as surely they will, he has no security from wreck and ruin but in his own self-possession. The teacher whose mind is thoroughly disciplined and well

balanced, can command his knowledge ; can apply himself to any subject, whether literary or judicial. His understanding, reason and judgment are ready for any emergency ; hence his efficiency.

Self-control also gives authority. To be qualified to govern others, the master must govern himself, his temper and his tongue. His power to quell a raging tumult or crush a rebellion lies in his coolness. Authority is undoubtedly a gift of nature ; but it is, in a measure, the result of other cardinal and cultivated qualities : principle, decision, independence, dignity, disinterestedness and refinement are *all* commanding ; they give power and impression to the whole man ; they speak out in his eye, his step, his voice and in all his movements and expressions. Such self-respect and such self-control gain for the teacher his true position as instructor and governor of his school. After all, the teacher, to be efficient, must be *professionally educated*.

De Witt Clinton has said, " Teaching ought to be among the learned professions." And

why not? May we require a young man to pass through a course of professional training before he can practice law or medicine, or become a respectable mechanic, and yet require no special training of the teacher, whose profession is more important than any other?

Must the lawyer make himself familiar with constitutional principles and legislative enactments, in order to be qualified to settle our difficulties; must the physician understand the laws of our physical being, the nature of disease and its remedies, in order to be allowed to administer to the health of the body; must the mechanic serve a three years' apprenticeship before he is allowed to build a house? And shall the teacher, to whom is committed the great work of training the human mind for life and immortality, during the most impressible and formative period of its existence, be allowed no *special* preparation?

It is a serious reflection upon the boasted intelligence of American mind, that so little interest is felt upon this subject, and so large a proportion

of all our teachers are entirely unfitted for their responsible duties. Teaching should be recognized as a *profession*; the teacher should be satisfied with nothing short of a thorough *professional* education; and, when fully qualified, he should receive that compensation and encouragement which his self-sacrifice and devotion to the good of the rising generation so richly merit. While he honors his profession he should be honored for the sake of it. But the mere "novice in the trade" who has chosen teaching only to avoid more unpleasant labor, or to gain the means to accomplish the object of his own personal ambition, having no interest in the business or idea of his responsibility, should be driven from the field as unworthy the high position which he occupies. Why should not the profession of teaching be as exalted, and be made as exclusive as any other? No good reason can be assigned.

Last but not least among the necessary qualifications of the school-teacher here to be enumerated, is moral and christian character. Every

teacher should be a model of excellence. No position in life demands higher attainments, as none commands a more important influence. Children are fine copyists. They receive their earliest and most durable impressions by imitation. Their teacher is always sitting or standing before them for his likeness. The impressions of his feelings, principles and character, and especially the *defects* in his character, are left, in the ambrotype of the school-room, upon the imperishable tablets of the immortal mind. The pupil may be expected to exhibit his teacher before the world. He often assumes his airs, imitates his tones, habits, and almost his very looks. He copies his roughness, stereotypes his oddities and perpetuates his errors and blunders. The results of these early impressions and of this influence will be felt upon future generations. The teacher is doing his most important work, then, when he seems to be idle.

And let it not be forgotten, that education does not begin with the alphabet, nor end when the scholar takes his diploma. It consists not

entirely in tasks and recitations. Character teaches ; intelligence, politeness, candor, magnanimity, veracity, kindness, worship, moral and christian integrity, *all* have an important, plastic power in the school-room. But “ these are no juvenile graces meant to be set on children’s breasts by grown-up teachers on whose own lives their glory never gleams.” If we would cultivate in our children that christian morality which alone can exalt their character and fit them for usefulness and happiness in life ; if we hope to see them respected and honored for their integrity and virtue, and if we would, through them, transmit to coming generations, the fruits and blessings of our holy religion, we must demand teachers who possess the principles and spirit of true piety.

No person, therefore, should presume to enter upon the responsibilities of the teacher’s office who has not, in active exercise, every principle of true manhood, every element of a noble character, mental, moral and religious.

### III.

#### SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

By School Management we mean much more than is expressed by school government. The former includes the latter. If a school is properly managed, it is of course, well governed. But strict government may sometimes be found in connection with bad management.

It is the object of school management to gain such an influence in the district and such authority in the school-room, as will prevent the necessity of discipline, and secure the improvement of the scholars. That teacher who has managed judiciously from the time he formed his first acquaintance with parent or pupil, until he is firmly established in his school, has gained a position of commanding influence, and can now control his pupils and secure all the benefits

of a well regulated school, seemingly without effort. But that teacher who relies solely upon his power *to govern*, is driven to the necessity of governing, and discipline, not instruction, becomes his chief employment. This results in evil, even though he governs well: for his time is needed for more important purposes.

If we visit the school-rooms of these two teachers, we shall find an almost perfect contrast in the scenes there presented, but may be puzzled to know the cause.

The master who is conscious that he has the love and confidence of his pupils and the power to control them, is at ease in the presence of his school. He seems to make no effort, yet there is no want of energy. His repose is totally unlike indolence; his ease of manner has no shuffling or lounging in it; his dignity is at the farthest possible remove from carelessness and indifference. There is manifest all the vitality and vigor of inward determination. This teacher talks but little, yet when he does speak, is always understood and instantly obeyed. When he



arrives, order begins. When he addresses an individual or a class, or raps upon the desk with his pencil, attention is given and quiet restored. In a word, by his presence merely, the three-fold office of school-keeping is achieved, without friction or failure. Authority is secured, mental activity stimulated, and knowledge acquired. The teacher has gained his easy and controlling position by skillful *management*.

We will now enter the school-room of the other. Some writer has described *this* master as "the incarnation of painful and laborious striving; a conscious perturbation; a principled paroxysm; an embodied flutter; a mortal stir; an honest human hurly-burly." He has good intentions, and evidently tries hard to control his school. He talks much and loudly, and threatens and even executes severe penalties, but all his efforts only illustrate his personal impotency and despair. "His expostulations roll over the boys' consciences like obliquely shot bullets over the ice." What a contrast! Yet, what is the difference? This teacher seems to

have the requisite qualifications as to talent and learning. It may be so, but it is evident that he has taken no pains to gain the esteem and confidence of his pupils ; has made no distinction between school government and school management. Hence his failure.

How to manage so as to gain the desired object, is then, the important question. The teacher's success depends upon a thousand *little* things—upon all he says and does from the beginning to the end of his term of service. He begins to operate for good or evil for himself as soon as he enters the district and often before. It is fortunate for him if no influence or prejudice, unfavorable to his success, has been brought to bear upon him before he forms a personal acquaintance with his patrons and pupils. Sure it is, everything that occurs in connection with them afterwards, tells upon his success or failure. This may depend upon the impressions he leaves upon a single family,—the first whose acquaintance he forms, and before he enters the school at all.

A young man from one of our academies had been employed to finish a school in which his predecessor had been unsuccessful. The school agent had conveyed him, a stranger, to his own house, as his first home in the district. His hostess had herself been a teacher and professed skill in the management of schools. Here was opportunity for our hero to gain the confidence and respect of an important patron, and thus secure her influence in his favor. But he did not feel the importance of such an effort, and hence took no pains to please. He soon allowed himself to engage in angry dispute with the good lady, in regard to the best method of conducting class recitation, which resulted, first, in a strong prejudice and determined hostility against him as a man and a teacher, and afterwards, in his dismissal from the school. But for this imprudence and want of common-sense, he might have been entirely successful, as his subsequent experience has shown.

First impressions of the teacher and of his management in school are usually permanent,

and hence very important. Let this be remembered.

The teacher should aim, in the first place, to gain the confidence and esteem of all with whom he meets ; for all have power to do him good or harm in his relations to the school. To this end, he should seek an early and familiar acquaintance with all. In the school-room and by the way, his first object should be to gain the confidence of his pupils. It is through them that he must first act upon the parents. Every experienced teacher knows, that if he would gain the confidence of the father, he must first gain the respect of the mother ; and, to secure this object, he must gain the love of the child. Hence he spares no pains to win the affections of the children, in the school and in the family. He improves the earliest opportunity to visit them at their homes ; is social and familiar with all ; adapts himself to the circumstances and peculiarities of each family, and manifests a deep interest in everything that interests them. He freely explains to parents his plans and

measures for the improvement of their children, and thus gains their esteem and coöperation.

If the teacher would manage to make his patrons and pupils his friends, and to interest them in the school, he must manifest an earnest devotion to his work, and show them by his zeal and faithfulness that he labors for their good only; must inspire them by his own living example, and bring them under his control by the power of generous sympathy.

To the same end, the teacher must maintain a manly independence, while he shows due respect to the opinions and feelings of those around him. The master is expected to understand his own business, yet he should not regard himself beyond improvement, nor refuse to listen to suggestions made to him by his employers. He may *act* independent of their suggestions if he deems it his duty, but he should patiently *listen*. And, in regard to other subjects which may be called up in the family and neighborhood, he should never refuse to express his honest convictions. He will be more respected by all

classes for having opinions of his own, if he does not attempt to intrude them upon others. He may "become all things to all men" so far as not to give offense, but not so far as to give up his manhood. In a word, if he would gain confidence, esteem and power, he must show himself to be a *man*, and in the discharge of all his duties, acquit himself like a man.

The first thing that demands the teacher's attention in the school-room, is *organization*. His success depends not so much upon moral suasion or legal suasion, as upon judicious management and the influence of a well regulated school.

In a steam engine we expect harmonious action only when all parts of the machine are in perfect order. A watch will keep correct time only when all the wheels and springs are in their places, and every part properly lubricated. Likewise a school must be completely organized, systematized and fully employed, or disorder and confusion will be the result. When so regulated, its machinery is self-adjusting—

order reigns, and the teacher is known as a good disciplinarian. But it is not generally understood how he gains his influence, and how he controls with so little effort.

Special attention must be given to the seating and classification of the pupils. The object in view is to prevent disorder and save time. Each pupil should be so located in the school-room, that he may quietly attend to his own duties and not disturb his fellows. All should be so arranged as to have the least possible number of classes, while each pupil is adapted to the standing of his class.

Every arrangement in the school should be systematic. There should be a time for everything, and everything in its time ; a time to open the school, which should never vary ; a definite time for every school exercise ; a time for study and a time for recess ; a time to whisper and a time to keep silent. In a word, everything that is desirable or that cannot be prevented, should be provided for and have its own time and place. Those irregularities that are necessary, should

be provided for as really as the regular exercises of the school. Whispering and leaving of seats should not be allowed in study hours, nor promiscuous questions when hearing recitations. Hence the importance of having a definite time for whispering, leaving seats, and asking questions. This will remove temptation and leave no apology for disorder at other times.

It is important also, that the pupils have full employment. The old proverb that "An idle brain is the devil's workshop," has more truth in it than poetry. But, ordinarily, three prominent studies are enough to give variety and occupy time. In determining the length of lessons, the teacher should estimate the ability of the class, and the difficulty of the subject. If the task is too easy, the scholar will have time to play ; if too difficult, he will become disheartened or superficial. The assigned lesson should therefore, tax the mind to the extent of its working ability—no more, no less.

But to prevent the evil and secure the good contemplated, the scholar must be made to feel



that study and recitation are the business of school-hours, and must become deeply interested in his lessons.

Hence, "to wake up mind" becomes a prominent object of the experienced teacher. In this, his skill and efficiency will be tested. If he can divert the attention from mischief and sport, can rouse from indolence and fix the mind upon the duties and exercises of the school, he needs no *written* testimonials of his qualifications to manage and instruct; it may be presumed that he understands his business and will be successful. But how

"To breathe the *enlivening* spirit, and to fix  
The generous purpose in the *glowing* breast,"

becomes an important question to the inexperienced. This depends both upon what the teacher *is* and what he *does*. The true teacher possesses that earnestness, fidelity and love for his work which render the scenes of the school-room pleasant and exciting. Does he manifest his interest in the school by promptness and punctuality? He may expect his pupils to

•

become prompt and punctual also. Is he deeply interested in their studies? He will be sure to inspire them with the same zeal. Does his soul glow with an enthusiasm almost divine in view of the dignity, importance and responsibility of his work? Then will he enkindle in their bosoms an abiding interest, an earnestness that cannot fail of success.

It is not necessary to remove all difficulties in order to interest the mind. If not beyond the comprehension and ability of the pupil, they serve only to stimulate to greater effort. The inborn desire for knowledge is strong, and if that desire be kept alive under the inspiration and direction of an earnest teacher, no labor nor toil will be irksome that is necessary to gain the desired object. Indeed this very toil becomes a source of pleasure. "Every new idea that enters into the presence of the sovereign mind, carries offerings of delight with it to make its coming welcome. Our Maker created us in blank ignorance for the very purpose of giving us the boundless, endless pleasure of learning new

things.” Familiar and apt illustrations in recitation tend to awaken interest in study; but illustrations should not be too familiar, nor instruction too free, for the same reason that lessons should not be too easy. If the teacher would fix the attention and rouse to earnest application, let him simply point out the way, and teach the pupil how to gain the desired knowledge; if he would cause the scholar’s mind to glow with enthusiasm, let him open to his view the twilight that emanates from the bright world of thought beyond, and his work is accomplished.

Thus pupils are encouraged to investigate and think for themselves, and to look beyond their text-books and teachers for information.

For the same object special efforts should be made to render the school-room and its exercises attractive and pleasant. And let it not be forgotten in this connection, that “variety is the spice of life.” Is punctuality at the opening of the school desirable? Let the teacher introduce some exercise at that hour, adapted to interest the pupils. They will not be tardy if there is

suitable inducement for them to be punctual. Brief and appropriate religious exercises with singing, seldom fail to secure the object. These exercises may be followed by some interesting story, or illustration of some familiar scientific fact. For instance, the philosophy of dew, rain and clouds ; the effects of heat and cold upon the atmosphere ; or the laws of health with the duty and means of preserving it, may be explained. Brief and familiar lectures on such subjects always interest and profit school children and youth. Facts gathered from history and from the incidents of every day life, may also be employed for the same purpose. And when the school has become tired of study, as indicated by restlessness and confusion, and the interest in school-duties begins to flag, let the teacher entertain his pupils for a few moments, by some *general* exercise as above recommended ; and the mind thus diverted, will return with eagerness to its accustomed task.

To the means already suggested for keeping alive the interest in school-duties, we may add

the *motives* which should be urged as incentives to action.

We must not mention among these that "emulation" which the apostle associates with "wrath, strife and sedition," and other "works of the flesh." The influence of that spirit is always injurious in school, as it is in the world. If emulation can mean a desire for improvement, progress and growth, which urges its possessor to earnest effort to excel, because excellence is in itself desirable, and to gain discipline and knowledge for their own sake; then let it be employed to awaken thought and keep alive interest in duty. We cannot recommend the use of prizes in school as a motive to study: for we have seen that their influence is evil and only evil. Awarding prizes gives undue prominence to an unworthy object, engenders a spirit of rivalry and strife among the pupils, and creates indifference in the many, while it stimulates the few to action. The prize is often unjustly awarded and always establishes a wrong standard of excellence. It rewards *success* and not

EFFORT—*talent* and not WORTH. Hence prizes, as such, should be discarded by every teacher.

But we may urge as motives to study, the desire to gain the approbation of the wise and the good; the desire to make advancement, to be useful and to do right, and as has already been suggested, the natural love of acquisition and the desire to know.

Once more, every successful manager of a school must learn the importance of *public opinion* as a means of securing a well regulated school. Public opinion has a controlling influence in every school, for good or for evil. As an engine of evil it is powerful, as many an unfortunate teacher can testify; as a means of preventing evil and securing good, it may be equally available.

A skillful and very successful teacher in the city of Boston, once gave us an example illustrating the subject before us: The "Quincy School," consisting of some seven hundred boys gathered promiscuously within the limits of a school district in the city, occupied one building

under the Principal above alluded to. This new school building had been occupied three years, yet we were assured that not a mark of pencil or knife could be found on the benches or walls or play-ground fence ! In answer to the inquiry how this protection had been secured, the master said it was done “ by piling on motives,” which created a healthy state of public sentiment. This is but one of a thousand examples that might be adduced to illustrate the same point. It is, indeed, of the first importance that every teacher aim to create and maintain a correct public opinion. It will prove a powerful auxiliary to his necessary work. His pupils may sometimes disregard his authority, and trifle with his feelings, and may manifest indifference to his counsel or rebuke ; but when *public opinion* speaks, its voice is heeded ; when *it* frowns, the culprit trembles. Happy, then, is that teacher who can so enlighten and influence the public mind that it will sustain him in the faithful discharge of school duties, and guard his sanctuary with vigilance and care.

## IV.

### SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.

THE hints upon the preceding pages are designed to aid the teacher in his efforts to prevent evil and secure the improvement of his pupils. The question now arises, if wrong has been committed and wholesome laws and regulations violated, what shall be done ?

In answering this question, we would say, *something* must be done—something that will show, without a doubt, that a MASTER has charge of the school.

It may here be premised that school discipline is based upon *authority*, as a starting point. We do not propose to argue the question, but assert it, without fear of successful contradiction. Implicit obedience to rightful authority must always be inculcated and enforced ; it is the very



germ of all good order and the only foundation of efficient government. In school management, as a means of preventing evil, we may persuade, invite and win ; at any time, when the doctrine of subordination is not questioned by the pupil, or after he has been subdued by authority, we may allure him by kind treatment and agreeable manners. But kindness cannot supply the place of authority, nor gratitude that of submission. Obedience is not a voluntary compliance with a request, but a hearty response to acknowledged authority—an implicit yielding to a command. Sympathy may render obedience pleasant and aid authority in securing prompt compliance, but it may never take its place.

And this authority must be recognized as just and unconditional. It is not obedience to the master, in view of his superiority, but to the station he fills, both as a duty and necessity. This authority vested in his office, he has no right to withhold ; it is not at his disposal, except to execute. He governs not for his own sake, but for the good of his school. The pupil must

not wait for the dictates of inclination or feeling before he yields, nor ask the reason for the command. If it be the voice of rightful authority, it must be obeyed, promptly and without question. Unconditional authority vested in one person, as master, is not only right in principle but absolutely necessary, both in the legal and moral government of the school.

Says an able writer on this subject, "The first step which the teacher must take, I do not mean in his course of moral education, but before he is prepared to enter that course, is to obtain the entire, unqualified submission of his school to his *authority*. \* \* \* \* *There must be authority.* The pupils may not often feel it, but they *must know that it is always at hand*, and must be taught to submit to it as to simple AUTHORITY. The subjection of the governed to the will of one man, in such a way that the expression of his will must be the final decision of every question, is the only government that will answer in school or in family. A government not of persuasion, not of reasons assigned, not of the will

of the majority, but of the will of the one who presides.”

For the time being his will must be law, and that law must be obeyed. The injured pupils may appeal to the trustees, from whom the teacher derived his power, but they may never disobey, however much they dislike his requirements. If, then, obedience has been refused, something must be done to correct the evil and prevent a repetition, or anarchy and chaos will be the result.

To meet such an emergency every teacher must have *reserved power*. A hundred thousand muskets have been manufactured, inspected and packed in boxes by the United States government, and now constitute the slumbering power of the nation. These instruments of death, though perfectly made and every part adjusted, have never been called into use; yet, they constitute the strength of the nation, and it is the existence of that power that gives security to our rights and permanency to our institutions. Suppose, now, an executive officer comes to

demand the payment of a bond or the rendition of a criminal. He has no musket ; is attended by no military force. Gentleness and civility mark all his movements. But let compliance to this demand of government be refused, and force is brought to bear upon the offender. Let resistance be sustained, and this force is multiplied, if need be, until a hundred thousand bayonets gleam in the sunshine, and the hundred thousand muskets speak with deadly power.

So the teacher must not only have reserved force, but also the disposition and ability to apply it when circumstances require. The mere knowledge that such power exists may prevent the necessity to employ it, still authority and good order cannot be maintained where that power is not acknowledged and felt.

The object of all punishment is two-fold : first, the good of the school, and secondly, the good of the offender. If the good of both the school and the individual cannot be secured by the punishment, the scholar must be sacrificed and not the school.

The murderer is not usually hung for his own benefit, but for the benefit of society, for the protection of the innocent and the vindication of law. In most cases, however, in school government, the crime may be so punished as to save and benefit both the school and the criminal. How shall this be done? We answer, in general, in a manner adapted to the nature of the offense, and the disposition and character of the offender. The punishment may be a look only, or a word, or a privation, or a restraint, or a task, or a forfeiture, or the infliction of pain; whatever it is, it must be compulsory and retributive, and always disagreeable. It finds nature in rebellion. Its object is to subdue that rebellion and restore the mind to deliberate thoughtfulness, self-examination and sincere repentance. At first, vexation may lead to resistance, but when the punishment is faithfully administered, passion subsides, and a quiet calmness and a sincere humiliation takes possession of the soul. The means may be physical, but the end is *moral*. The "chastening" is always "grievous,"

but “afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”

But as already suggested, it is folly in the extreme to act by rule in the discipline of a school. That physician is a quack who prescribes the same remedy for every disease. Some patients need only encouragement; others need stimulants, and still others soothing remedies, to allay inflammation or a fever; and there are some diseases that nothing but *calomel* can cure. The physician, then, must study the constitution of his patient and the nature of the disease, and administer accordingly.

So the school teacher must study the disposition and character of his pupils and learn the circumstances and purpose of the crime, before he can prescribe a remedy that will *cure*.

Allow us here to suggest, the teacher should distinguish between the “light of the glow-worm and a spark of fire about to fall into a magazine of powder.” If a slight offense has been committed, which threatens no evil result to the school, it were better to take no notice of it.

If, on the other hand, the offense is public, and to pass it over would give license to a repetition, and put in jeopardy the teacher's authority, let him treat it with becoming promptness and severity. He should check the first indications of insubordination. No teacher loses his authority at once. No school that has been kept in proper subjection, assumes the attitude of rebellion. If first indications of improper conduct receive proper attention, more aggravating offenses will not occur. Loose government makes punishments necessary. That master, therefore, who exercises a mild severity at all times, and keeps his school in perfect subjection, will seldom need to resort to severer measures.

Faults that have an influence upon the school should be corrected publicly, that all may feel the influence of the discipline. If they are known only to the teacher, he may punish the offender in private for his own good.

But what degree of severity is to be recommended? That degree which is necessary to accomplish the object in view.

What kind of punishment shall be inflicted—*moral suasion* or the *rod*? We answer, one or both, as circumstances require. The quack and the theorist only maintain that either moral suasion or legal suasion *alone* will govern schools. The kind word of encouragement, the confidential appeal, the gentle reproof, the stern prohibition and the severe blow are *all* appropriate and necessary in school discipline.

It is a mistaken idea that corporal punishment is in itself an evil, to be employed only as a last resort. It is not “violence and outrage.” Is it cruel to rouse an invalid from refreshing sleep in order to save him from the devouring flames? Is it cruel to restrain a madman, who is attempting to commit suicide? Is the surgeon hard-hearted because he performs a painful operation to save the life of his patient? By no means. Is the teacher, then, to be accused of cruelty who aims to prevent violence by teaching the necessity of subjection? He is not cruel but merciful. This system has more of kindness in it than any other. It is not kind to leave the



pupil to grow up under the influence of an unsubdued temper. It is cruelty in the parent or teacher not to govern and subdue the rebellious child.

“Physical coercion is but the final appliance of moral suasion,” and in numerous instances, the only means of securing moral results.

If the disease requires calomel, sugar pellets will not cure. The mortifying limb must be amputated. It is not as the last resort, but the *only remedy*.

Let the master, then, kindly but promptly, enforce wholesome regulations. Let him do this, if need be, by the severe use of the rod. “The rod and reproof give wisdom.” “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” “He that spareth the rod, *hateth* his son.”

Many a child has been saved in school, that was lost to the family and society ; lost for the want of proper discipline, and saved by the legal and moral power of the rod. Indeed, the utility of corporal punishment in schools, is no longer a

debatable question. Its use and necessity are sustained alike by human and divine authority, by common-sense and universal experience.

But punishment should never be inflicted in anger. Firmness and decision are no more necessary in cases of discipline, than coolness and candor. The pupils must be convinced that the teacher seeks their good only, and reproves and punishes them as a matter of necessity, and not under the influence of passion. He will, then, retain their confidence and respect, however great his severity. '

Punishment to be effectual must be *thorough*. A half-whipped boy is only aggravated, not conquered. Hence the object of his punishment is not accomplished. The teacher should never threaten unless he designs to execute, but when the crisis comes, he should leave no necessity for a repetition. We can conceive of no proper punishment that may not be inflicted with all needed severity.

The teacher is responsible for the mode of punishment, as well as for its faithful execution

Any method that will inflict a permanent physical injury is unjustifiable. Holding weights in extended hands, "sitting upon nothing," bending forward with the arm extended to the floor, all blows on or about the head with stick or ferule, and all violent shaking of children by the shoulders, endangering their health and life, are entirely improper. The teacher who resorts to such punishments must be wanting in common-sense and common intelligence.

Another important suggestion: severity should always be accompanied and followed by faithful counsel and kind treatment.

Never let the sun go down upon the wrath of a chastised pupil. See him alone, before he is allowed to mingle with his companions or return to his home. Otherwise he may excite sympathy and create a rebellion. The object to be gained is to win the offender back to duty and cheerful obedience, and thus save the school from anarchy and confusion, and the scholar, it may be, from a course of recklessness and crime. After the offense has been punished and

the difficulty settled, kind and confidential treatment will usually disarm the enraged pupil of his hostility and restore him to favor; a few moments spent with him in faithful, private conversation, may make him a friend for life. Without the chastisement this moral influence would have been of no avail; with it, it is entirely successful.

This mingling of the severe with the mild in discipline, is the more necessary in consequence of the heterogeneous character of our schools. The teacher cannot select his pupils from those families that have been under wholesome influence, but must receive many who have been entirely ungoverned at home; the current of whose evil propensities has received a steady direction and violent impulse, from long years of parental misrule and vice. These scholars must be controlled, and if possible, subdued. It is cruel to reject them from the school, and thus cut them off from the last hope of improvement and recovery from their ruinous course of life.

The master is held responsible for the results of his discipline ; results which must be felt in the school, in the neighborhood and in the world. Away, therefore, with all utopian theories of school government. Experience and skill may improve the means of application, but cannot change the system of discipline, founded in nature and sustained by the experience of the wise in every age, from the days of Solomon to the present time. All who would discharge their duty in these important relations, should aim and strive to become judicious managers and good disciplinarians.

## V.

### SCHOOL INSTRUCTION.

IN a previous chapter we have enumerated some of the necessary qualifications of the good Teacher. We now propose to make a few suggestions as to the method of imparting instruction.

It is important here to distinguish between Instruction and Recitation. The former is the business of the teacher ; the latter belongs to the pupil only. The object of the one is to impart information ; of the other, to express the thoughts which the scholar has gained by study, observation and reflection. School instruction should aim to interest and aid the mind in self-application ; school recitation serves to render acquired knowledge more definite and conceptions more vivid, and cultivates the power and habit of expression.

But instruction must not take the place of recitation. There is more danger of teaching too much than too little. *Discipline* is the end of teaching. The object is not to fit the pupil for any one special trade, art or profession, but to teach him to think and give him the ability honorably to fill any station in life. The gaining of knowledge is a secondary consideration. It would be better to leave this entirely out of the question, than to have it substituted for discipline. It follows, therefore, that just so much instruction should be given as is necessary to save the scholar from discouragement and make it possible for him, by earnest and persevering effort, to accomplish his object.

To this end, let it be suggested, the teacher should never answer a question directly, that the pupil has power to answer ; should never solve an example that he can solve, or remove a difficulty that he can surmount. It is the instructor's business rather, to guide the way and encourage his pupils to make the necessary efforts. If they ask for more light, he should give them only the

*twilight* ; if they falter, he should sustain and encourage them, and if they entirely fall, he should help them to rise again, and breathe into them the life-giving spirit of courage and hope. And, as far as possible, instruction should be given to classes, and not to individuals. This is recommended as a matter of economy. Should the teacher devote his time to individuals, in a school of thirty pupils, he could give each only twelve minutes ; in a school of sixty, only six minutes per day. Now let the school of sixty pupils be divided into six classes, and the same instruction given to them, each would have one hour of the teacher's time every day, and would receive more benefit than from individual instruction during the same time.

In some instances individual instruction may be given, but never when the same may as well be given before the class. Calls for individual assistance (or questions of any kind) should *never* be allowed during class recitations. A definite time should be set apart for private instruction—such a time as will not disturb the



school or withdraw the attention of the teacher from other duties.

Again, the instructor should teach subjects and not books; principles more than facts. The scholar may know all that is contained in the four hundred English Grammars, and yet be ignorant of the science of Language. He may do all the "sums" [examples] in all the Arithmetics extant, and not understand the simplest principles of Calculation. Books are useful, but not indispensable. Like a spacious black-board, they aid the teacher in his work of systematic instruction. That they should be used for this purpose only, is the thing recommended. Attention should be directed to the *principles* of the science to be taught, which should be fully and clearly explained.

It seems superfluous to suggest that instruction should be *thorough*. Yet such a suggestion is often necessary. No principle or fact should be passed over until it is well understood and firmly fixed in the mind of the pupil. First let the teacher explain upon the black-board, or by the

use of such apparatus as the subject requires, the principles contained in the lesson. Then each member of the class should be required to repeat the explanation and give the reasons. None should be allowed to advance until *first principles* are thoroughly understood. This suggestion is the more important as so little attention is given in our schools to the elements of science. How common it is, when pupils leave the primary school to enter upon the duties of life or to prosecute their studies in the seminary or college, to find them entirely deficient in the simplest principles of the primary branches. They have no practical knowledge of Reading, Grammar or Arithmetic; are unable to explain principles or apply facts in any business transaction, and frequently incapable of writing a respectable letter to a friend. As a consequence, we often find scholars advanced in Algebra, French and Music who could not explain simple subtraction, or sound correctly the vowels of our language. This is a sad commentary upon the qualifications and fidelity of our common school teachers, and

no time should be lost or efforts spared to correct the evil. The responsibility rests mainly with the *teacher*. He should feel this responsibility and prepare himself for the discharge of his important duties.

And it is equally important to teach *correctly*. Many do not teach facts ; others give no reasons for the facts asserted. Both these systems of instruction are defective. For example, in teaching Arithmetic we inquire of the school-boy, how many fundamental rules there are. "Four," is the reply. Some say, "Six." (It must be so for the books so have it.) But what is Arithmetic ? "The science of numbers." What do you mean by numbers ? "Any aggregate of units." What can we do with numbers ? "Add them together [Addition], and take them apart or compare them [Subtraction]." This is all we can do with whole numbers. Multiplication and Division are short methods of adding and subtracting—not new rules. Addition and Subtraction of Compound Numbers and Duodecimals are but the repetition of the simple rules,

under a different law of notation. Addition and Subtraction of Fractions are only adding and subtracting units which have a nominal divisor—the common denominator. In a word, by these two rules, or a modification of them, all the examples in Arithmetic must be solved. When we leave these, we pass into Algebra, or other branches of the higher mathematics.

We inquire further, what is Simple Subtraction? “The taking the lesser number from the greater.” But we do not change either number in the process. We only compare the minuend with the subtrahend, and write down the difference or remainder.

Subtraction then, is a comparison of two numbers to find the difference. But in case the lower figure in the lower number is greater than that in the upper, how do we perform the operation? “Borrow one [ten or a hundred as the case may be,] from the next left hand figure, which is added to the figure in the upper number before subtracting. Then carry one to the next left, lower figure.” Why carry one? “Because

we borrowed.” But we did not borrow, only *supposed* one or ten to be added. We carry then, because we did not borrow—to cancel the one *not* taken away, as we supposed.

Once more, what are Fractions? “Broken numbers.” What school-boy understands this? Broken numbers are no more fractions, of necessity, than units. The one piece of the one-third of an apple is as really a unit as the apple itself. The earth is a unit, though it is but a small part of the solar system.

In another sense every finite, whole number is a fraction or broken number. The world, and even the whole system of worlds of which we have any knowledge, are only parts of one “stupendous whole.” There is then, properly speaking, but one unit in the universe, and that is the *universe itself*.

Broken numbers cannot be fractions, unless considered as parts of a greater whole. Colburn says: “PARTS OF ONE ARE CALLED FRACTIONS.” This definition, properly explained, will leave the pupil with correct information.

The "Rule of Three" furnishes another example of false instruction. Many authors and teachers leave the impression upon the learner's mind that the "Rule of Three" is equivalent to "Proportion." But why called the "Rule of Three?" Doubtless because three terms are used in the solution of examples. But what is Proportion? "The combination of two equal ratios." What is ratio? "The quotient arising from the division of one number by another." It requires, therefore, two terms for every ratio, and *four* terms for every proportion. Proportion is, then, the Rule of *Four* and not the "Rule of Three."

But to teach facts is not enough. To make his instructions really valuable, the teacher must give and require the reasons; must give the "why and wherefore" for every statement capable of demonstration.

He has under consideration, for instance, the Arabic or Roman figures. He should proceed, first of all, to inquire for their origin and history. The characters representing numbers were,

originally, *straight marks*, and probably written in the following manner :

The Arabic | || ≡ □ ▢ ▣ ▤ ▥ ▦, have been changed by degrees into their present forms, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. The nine digits with the [0] cypher, constituted the characters by which the processes of calculation were carried on.

The Roman characters I, V, X, L, C, D, M, had their origin also in straight marks. The I indicated a unit. The X was made by the crossing of two I's in counting ; thus I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, X, ten ones. Of these ten straight marks, the last two [X] were made arbitrarily to stand for ten, and the preceding I's omitted. The V is simply one-half of the X (the upper half) in *form*, as five is half of ten. Three I's may indicate one hundred, and may be expressed by □, or (with the corners worn off) C. One-half of □ (the lower half) gives us, in form, L, which stands for fifty. Four I's, written in this form, □, and afterwards in this, M, were made to represent a thousand. And one-half of □, or D, represented five hundred.

The combination of Roman characters was expressed by addition and subtraction. Thus,  $V=5$ ,  $IV=4$  or  $5-1=4$ ;  $X=10$ ,  $IX=9$  or  $10-1=9$ . And  $VI$  or  $5+1=6$ ;  $XV$  or  $10+5=15$ .  $MDCCCXXXIV$  or  $1000+500+300+30+4=1834$ . The nine digits were probably so called from the fact that the fingers [*digiti*] were used in counting. We have *ten* characters representing numbers, and no more, because the originators of figures had ten *thumbs* and *fingers*. Hence the fundamental law of notation, “figures increase in *ten-fold* ratio.”

But why do these figures increase from the *right* toward the left? And why do we begin to add or subtract at the right-hand column? Simply as a matter of convenience, because we are “right-handed.”

Such familiar illustrations both instruct and interest beginners in this important science, as also in every other.

In conducting class recitations, a free use of the black-board, both by teacher and pupils, is very important. All are thus instructed by a



single explanation and the instructions are much longer remembered, because received through the *sense of sight*.

The teacher should never consent to teach without this "black-wall" on one side of his school-room. As far as possible also, he should have cube-blocks, globes and maps, to aid in the explanation of the subjects that come before the classes. And with all, Webster's or Worcester's large dictionary should be upon every school-desk.

When the subject will admit of it, instruction by topics is much to be preferred. This compels the pupil to think and reason for himself and renders his knowledge available. If questions are asked, they should not imply the answer, but should be such as require an independent knowledge of the lesson, to answer correctly. Questions should be asked before the *individual* is called upon to answer, that the whole class may fix their attention. As the lesson cannot be recited until it is learned, the scholar or the class should be required to repeat the same, in

all cases of deficiency. The habit of lecturing classes as a substitute for recitation should never be indulged. It tends to prevent suitable preparation of lessons and discourage self-reliance. It substitutes knowledge for discipline and thus defeats the main object of education. We shall treat this subject more extensively in a subsequent chapter.

Frequent and thorough reviews are indispensable to successful study. It is not the number of books passed over, nor the length of time spent in school, but thoroughness that makes the scholar. Repetition tends to remove the dross of knowledge and bring out the pure gold. It makes sure what was doubtful, and firmly fixes the facts and principles of science in the mind of the learner.

Each day there should be a review of the previous day's lesson; at the end of each week, of all that has been studied during that week, and at the end of each term, of all that has been studied during that term. And this study and these reviews should contemplate a thorough

public examination, and special efforts should be made to secure the attendance of all parents and friends in the district.

The teacher must learn to discriminate that he may adapt his instructions to different classes of scholars. In every school is found a great variety of capacities, dispositions and attainments. Every such peculiarity requires peculiar treatment and instruction, and the teacher must so understand human nature and the phenomena of school-life, that he can adapt his teaching to the wants and necessities of each.

The *roots* of all knowledge are and must be bitter. That study which will benefit, must require effort, as already suggested. The mind must be tasked to be disciplined; it must be disciplined to be educated. If, then, we find scholars whose tasks are all easy, so easy that it costs little effort to learn their lessons, we should lay upon them greater burdens; should rouse them to loftier aspirations. The mother eagle is said to push her eaglet out of its nest for the purpose of teaching it to fly. It were much

better that it be exposed to fall, than not to learn to fly. So must our easy, fluent pupils be taught how to make application, that they may train and develop their untried powers, and gain strength for the duties of manhood.

Another class of scholars are quick and penetrating, but unpardonably self-sufficient. They are proud to appear well in recitations but anxious to have it understood that they have given little or no attention to the lessons.

Such scholars should be proved with *hard* questions. Let the teacher expose their weakness and show them the difference between sound scholarship, and flippant, boisterous pretensions. Let him entangle them in mazes like flies in a cobweb, until they learn their true position and are willing to apply themselves as none will do who feel that they have already attained to perfection. Thus may flaws be ground away from the diamond. "*Vexatio dat intellectum.*"

We have an example from a teacher of Physiology. A member of his class had frequently annoyed him by this self-sufficient spirit.

On one occasion he asked this pupil, "What is the use of the spleen?" After some delay, he answered, "I have once known, but really, I have now forgotten!" "Here is a marvelous thing," replied the instructor; "downward from the age of Hippocrates, all physicians have inquired the use of the spleen, but have been baffled throughout sixty generations; yet you, a beardless youth, have made the wonderful discovery, and not only so, but have not even thought it worth retaining in your memory! The medical world would have made a universal jubilee in view of such a discovery, but you have forgotten it altogether."

Jeremy Taylor has said, "So have I known a luxuriant vine to swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spread itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the wine-press; but when the vine-dresser had cut the wilder plant and made it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy branches and made account of the loss of blood by the

return of fruit." Thus it is in the culture of mind. Prune off the leaves and useless twigs of self-conceit, and the fruit of true scholarship will appear.

Another class of pupils are fearful and self-distrusting. They meet difficulties on every hand, but discover in themselves no ability to overcome them. Such scholars need special encouragement. They can be assured that their failures may prove as beneficial to them in point of discipline, as would their success. It is not the finding of truth, but the search for it, that educates the mind. Hence inferior scholars, as they appear in the class-room, often turn out superior men in life. They have shown less brilliantly than their fellows in recitation, but have really made more efforts, and hence gained more practical benefit than they. They have received from their teacher less information but more encouragement and inspiration; this is what they most needed.

For such pupils, the instructor should bend down the branches of the tree of knowledge,

but leave them the toil of plucking the fruit. He should lead them by degrees into the difficulties they have to encounter. As they enter the path that leads up the hill of science, they will see but a small part of the height to be scaled. If, when they have surmounted one ridge, another appears, it seems but one more. If, as they ascend,

“Hills peep o’er hills and Alps on Alps arise,”

they will gradually have gained strength and courage to encounter greater difficulties and overcome greater obstacles, till, at length, they can brave the glacier and the avalanche with the fearlessness of a Hannibal or a Kane.

Still other scholars load their tasks with needless difficulties; like the foreigner who dined at a Yankee table. A boiled ear of Indian corn was placed before him. “Ignorant of the usual method of chewing the corn and eschewing the cob, he began at the little end and ate it, as one would eat a radish, *cob and all*.”

The teacher should aim to remove such needless difficulties, and to show the scholar how to

direct his efforts and apply his energies. With this power of discrimination and adaptation to the disposition and circumstances of his pupils, the instructor will be eminently successful ; without it, he can but fail.

That it is the right and duty of every teacher to impart *moral* instruction, may here be taken for granted.

It were enough to know that the object of the school is not to form scholars merely, but to form and develop *men, citizens, immortal beings*. These citizens are to constitute the community and the state. And what would be the condition of that state which has no regard for justice, integrity, truth, reverence, and no fear of God before their eyes ?

The answer to this question is written in characters of blood on many pages of the world's history. And, if we would avoid a future "Reign of Terror" in America, our Common Schools must be nurseries of *sound Bible morality*. It must be the teacher's business, then, to give regular and systematic moral instruction.



It is his to aid in laying deep the foundations of of public justice ; in giving that profound and quick sense of the sacredness of right and the everlasting obligations of truth, without which law has no sanctity, private contracts no binding force, the pulpit no reverence, justice no authority. In a word, it is his to exert such an influence, and inculcate such principles as will tend to save our youth from vice and crime, and preserve and fit them for the duties of private and public life.

How, then, shall this moral instruction be given? First of all and at all times, the lessons of morality should be taught by the influence of good example.

Moral and Christian character is an indispensable qualification of the teacher, because, without such a character, he cannot exert a wholesome influence over his pupils. In vain does he preach homilies upon virtue and goodness, or attempt to enforce moral lessons, while he himself is reckless and profane. If, however, he is interested in the subject, if his moral

sentiments are in a state of healthy activity, his whole deportment will declare it; every thought and feeling that pervade his soul will be expressed in his words, tones and actions.

And if such be his character, he will seek for modes to benefit his pupils by moral instruction. Nor will he fail to find them.

When contriving ways to impart moral instruction, the teacher should not forget that the BIBLE is the source of all genuine morality. To this he must appeal for authority, from whatever source his moral lessons are derived. It is no part of his business to teach dogmas or creeds, but he may impart the soul-inspiring principles and pure morality of the Holy Scriptures. These gems of wisdom lie scattered all over his field of labor, but like the drifting rocks from the mountain quarry, they have one common locality—the Bible.

It is not recommended that the Scriptures should be used as a common reading-book in school, but for moral and religious purposes *only*. The teacher should, if possible, leave

the impression upon the minds of his pupils that the Bible is sacred, unlike all other books, and infinitely more valuable. Then will its instructions be clothed with authority and power, and its influence be salutary and sanctifying.

Cases are constantly occurring in the school-room from which moral instructions may be drawn. These should all be improved. Every violation of moral duties in the intercourse of pupils, should be made the occasion of imparting moral lessons. Falsehood, injustice and profanity are among the bad habits of scholars. The teacher should correct these habits in such a way that the whole school may be benefited. He should expose in a mild and solemn manner, the folly, sinfulness and degrading tendency of such conduct, and at the same time, appeal to the conscience, wake up, if he can, the slumbering sense of obligation, and thus give tone to public sentiment in school. Make such conduct unpopular, and it will not be indulged in; make the offender *feel* that he has wronged himself and his school-mates, and he will not be likely to

repeat the act. The delicate conscience of the child is quick to perceive the wrong, and if aroused, will incline him to cultivate the better qualities of the soul by the practice of virtue.

The teacher may employ all legitimate motives to accomplish his object, and he should discriminate in the selection and application of motives, as circumstances require.

The lessons of school present frequent occasions for moral instruction. Science, Philosophy and History abound in moral sentiments. Indeed, there is a moral in everything; in every lesson recited, in every school-exercise, in every action, thought and feeling of school-life, in every incident that occurs in the busy world around us, and it is the business of the teacher to gather up and apply these moral elements for the benefit of those committed to his care. In what particular manner such facts and incidents should be employed, must be left to the good sense of the instructor, who is presumed to be interested and anxious for the improvement and welfare of his pupils.

But moral instruction is too important to depend upon casual circumstances. A specific time should be set apart for some appropriate exercise of this kind.

In connection with the reading of the Scriptures, the teacher may explain and enforce their great cardinal principles. Such exercises must of course, be short and interesting to be profitable, and may be varied according to circumstances ; but no conscientious teacher will neglect or trifle with a duty so plain and important.

Such instructions in no way interfere with the different religious opinions that may be entertained in the district, nor do they tend to sectarian results. Moral and religious instruction in schools is merely a war upon *Atheism*. Its design and tendency is to purify and elevate the affections, to regulate the conscience and to guide and control the whole moral being ; to fit the citizen for the duties and responsibilities of a Christian community, and the immortal man for the blessings of a higher life.

Nor do such instructions retard intellectual education. Indeed, *moral* culture is indispensable to true greatness and aids in the development and growth of mind, as the heat and light of the sun aid in the growth of vegetation. A plant will grow without these influences, in the dark cellar, but its growth is unnatural and distorted. It may be as *large* as the one whose roots have been nourished upon the hill-side, and whose leaves have felt the gentle breeze and glorious sunlight of heaven,—but it can have none of its health and vigor. So the *intellectual man* may be great, but it is the greatness of a BURR, a BYRON or a PAINE! The world has felt the influence of too many *such* men. The true man has a sound body and a highly cultivated mind and *heart*. His passions are in subjection to self-love, self-love to conscience, and conscience to the word and will of God. Such should be the result of Common School education.

## VI.

### STUDY AND RECITATION.

DISCIPLINE is not only the end of teaching, as was asserted in a previous chapter, but also of study and recitation.

This theory of education, we are aware, is at war with the views of many modern teachers. They claim to have found a more excellent way; have substituted listening for study, lecturing for recitation and knowledge for discipline. They strive by every means in their power, to lighten the scholar's labors and to shorten his course of study. But all such theories are visionary, and all such efforts vain. Mere knowledge of books, or of "men and things," however accurate and extensive, cannot educate the human mind, nor fit it to struggle with the stern realities of life. Long and patient application, is the *only* condition of desirable attainments. Education is not a process of gaining information merely, but the

cultivation and development of all the powers of body, mind and soul. Knowledge is of great practical benefit to an educated mind, but must not be mistaken for education itself. The well disciplined, with the same amount of knowledge, has the advantage a thousand times over the undisciplined.

This truth is clearly illustrated by the following comparison by a learned author: "Let two young persons, equal in all respects, be selected and separately educated; let the period be for the same term of years, but not less than five nor more than ten; let one be trained in the modern system of knowledge, and the other in any system of the severe old school, rod-enforced, self-exerting, spirit-trying, patience-provoking, labor-causing, toil-producing, but specially in the system directly to be recommended; then launch both the pupils, at the same time and in the same circumstances of poverty and destitution, into the troubled waters of life. The latter shall be seen, swimming, or wading, or walking, as the tide demands or admits; the



former, floating, or driven at the mercy of the winds, mired or sinking! Or let both pursue a professional or literary life. The truly disciplined, with even less knowledge, shall very soon excel the other in any assigned task; shall if necessary, excel him in acquiring knowledge, and this with so much ease, that ten years after academical training shall have ended, the world will ascribe the difference not to the opposite elementary training, but to differences in native intellectual powers."

Study and recitation are the principal means by which the desirable results of education are secured; these constitute the business of the school-room. Study is the exercise of *acquiring*; recitation, that of *expression*.

Which is the most important for discipline, we will not here undertake to decide. And whether study is more necessary as a preparation for a good recitation, than a well conducted recitation is for successful study, may be doubtful.

The distinctive duties of teacher and pupil, must be well understood and constantly kept in

view. Both study and recitation belong to the pupil exclusively. The teacher should conduct the recitation, but he should never recite the lesson ; he may stimulate the mind and direct the studies of his class, but he cannot study for them.

Recitations differ in kind with the nature of the ideas to be recited. They may be forms or sounds and their arrangement, as alphabets, spelling-lessons and paradigms ; they may be the meaning and relation of words, as in the translation and analysis of sentences ; or they may be figures and signs for the expression of mathematical and other abstract truths.

The form of recitation differs with the age, ability and classification of the pupils. Different teachers may not conduct the same recitations exactly alike, and the same teacher will vary his form for the sake of variety and to avoid monotony. But however extensive this variety and numerous the modifying circumstances, there is ordinarily but a single object to be gained, viz.: the expression of pupil's thoughts, or the

thoughts which he has made his own by study, *embodied in his own language.*

Some captions, mathematical definitions and fixed rules can be better expressed in the words of the author, but in all other cases and in the various kinds of recitation, the language of the pupil is much to be preferred. That teacher who would make scholars worthy of the name, must labor to employ the mind as a depository of *thoughts* and not of mere words and signs.

Recitation has its origin in nature, and is always practiced in childhood. As soon as the child begins to think, he begins to express his thoughts to others; that expression is recitation. His desire to know and to make known, grow up in the mind together, and if properly cultivated in the family and school, will result in sound scholarship and thorough discipline. Whatever the child learns he is sure to communicate. He does not wait to be questioned nor attempt to use borrowed language, yet he never fails to express his thoughts so as to be fully understood. All the ideas that enter into his mind are

immediately formed into words, looks and actions. And if parents refuse to listen, the child tells his story to a favorite doll or a pet dog, with all the enthusiasm of an actress on the stage, or an orator in the Senate.

At this early period lessons are learned from observation, and recited without reference to grammatical and rhetorical rules. But they are none the less beneficial.

The child learns to think by the exercise of his perceptive faculties ; he dwells upon images of his own creation, invents his little stories, and thus cultivates the imagination ; he compares facts and forms conclusions, and in this way calls into exercise his reasoning powers. And all these thoughts, from whatever source derived and however formed, are recited again and again, and thus he learns to talk. We are astonished sometimes to observe how rapidly children learn the use of language, but find the reason in the fact that they are incessantly talking.

And why should this natural process of learning and reciting in the nursery, be entirely

discarded in the school-room? The pupil in the school and the student in the college, is only the child matured by age. He has substituted books for playthings, study for observation, and class-recitation for the spontaneous rehearsal of his childish thoughts. But why now pervert the means of education so nobly begun? why change the recitation into a lecture or an examination, and thus defeat the very object to be gained? Would the parent undertake to teach his child to walk or talk by lecturing or questioning on the subject? Would he not, rather, require him to exercise his own powers and faculties, as the only means of learning these important arts? The answer is obvious and the comparison instructive. The scholar must learn by study, and recite independently of his instructor, if he would be benefited by the exercise. Let the teacher then, observe the habits of early childhood and he will not mistake the true theory of class-recitation.

Study and recitation are for the mind what food and exercise are for the body. The physical

energies cannot be developed without exercise ; yet, exercise without food, would not give bodily strength and vigor. By study the mind is fed with knowledge, and by recitation its faculties are called into vigorous action. Natural love for play inspires the child to spend all his waking hours in physical activity. He knows no rest ; is always running, jumping, skating, sliding, or like " Our Charley," is " tooting, pounding, hammering, singing, meddling and asking questions." Here indeed, we have the only example of perpetual motion yet discovered. But there is no other condition of physical health and growth.

So also, the love of knowledge gives the child a fondness for observation, reflection and study, and a natural desire to communicate leads him to rehearse to others his every thought. And happy is that scholar whose glowing, youthful enthusiasm has not been checked by the indifference or stupidity of his teachers.

It is by these two processes, study and recitation, that the mind grows from infancy to

manhood. By these alone the prattling boy that once played around the farm-house, "amid the snow drifts of New Hampshire," became a *man* who afterwards thundered in the Senate, and gained the audience of an admiring world.

Study and recitation are exercises not only for the nursery and school-room, but also for the drawing-room, the lyceum and the work-shop. And if under the direction of intelligent teachers in early life, every opportunity will be improved for ripening scholarship and perfecting character, until the great work of education is finished. The object of recitation is not merely to enable the instructor to examine and correct the members of his class; it is in itself an important exercise and indispensable as a means of discipline.

Erroneous views as to the object to be gained, have led to wrong methods of conducting recitation. The Socratic method is too often adopted in our schools, and the whole hour spent in asking "leading questions." This is not tolerated even in the examination of witnesses in the court-

room ; much less should it be allowed in the school. If a knowledge of the lesson was all that is desirable, and to learn whether the pupils have studied faithfully, the only object of the recitation, questioning would be the most expeditious method of reaching the result. But this is not the case, as will appear in the course of our suggestions.

Moreover, scholars may answer questions with only a *partial* knowledge of the lesson ; yet, they can have no distinct ideas upon the subject ; they feel no interest and hence receive no profit. Such pupils are in the condition of a stagnant well of water, *waiting to be pumped*, or like a dead body before a coroner's jury, about to undergo a *post mortem* examination.

It is allowable to ask questions in connection with recitation for the purposes specified, and sometimes for the sake of variety, but still it must be remembered that the teacher's questioning is not the scholar's reciting. Whenever the habit is indulged it is attended with injurious consequences. Yet in how many of our schools



is a better system adopted? The oral method of instruction is equally objectionable. The familiar illustration and formal lecture have their own time and place in the process of education, but they must not consume the time set apart for study or recitation. These occupy the foreground in every good school, and must have the first attention. That teacher who spends the hour in explaining and repeating what the class can learn and recite, has mistaken his duty; if he aims to amuse them by interesting lectures, he does them positive harm. He may gain a reputation for his learning and "aptness to teach," but alas! his pupils receive neither credit nor advantage. Explanations should be made only to remove positive difficulties and should always be regarded as aids to study. Lectures are designed more particularly to communicate information, and are appropriate only when knowledge is the object in view.

But recitation has important uses of its own, and one of these is to induce study.

How many lessons would be learned in any school if no recitations were required? How much knowledge or discipline would be gained by hard study, if the pupils understood beforehand that the hour for recitation would be occupied by the teacher in lecturing or asking questions?

No person of experience in school-life can fail to answer these questions correctly; all must acknowledge that in the case supposed one of the strongest motives to study is removed. But let these pupils know that the lesson must not only be learned, but *recited* and *explained to others*, and a deep interest and an earnest application will be the result. And this influence is felt not merely upon the indolent, but upon every class of scholars and under all circumstances.

The second advantage of recitation here to be noticed, is its power to give distinctness and vividness to acquired knowledge. The pupil's thoughts are not clear and firmly fixed in his mind until they are in a form to be recited. For this reason the young teacher always makes

more improvement in the branches studied than his scholars. He is often surprised to observe how much better he understands the subject for teaching it ; how much more vivid his conceptions and how much longer remembered. The lessons must, therefore, be *recited* or not understood, and that teacher who adopts a wrong method of conducting recitation, withholds one of the surest remedies for superficial scholarship. Indeed, should all possibility of giving expression to thoughts be removed, the strongest motive for thinking would be taken away. Our ideas would become dull and confused, and it is doubtful whether we should long have any ideas at all.

The utility and importance of recitation as an incentive to study and as a means of rendering conceptions distinct and permanent, is further illustrated in the habits of social life. There is no motive so strong to induce careful reading among the educated, as the hope of enjoying companionship with the cultivated and refined, or the expectation of joining a literary circle in

the drawing-room where free conversation is indulged upon educational subjects. No scholar would study with so much earnestness and profit the English classics, ADDISON, JOHNSON, MILTON and SHAKSPEARE, or make himself so familiar with DICKENS, as he who had been called upon to write an essay upon English taste, character or manners.

No Statesman understands American politics and policy so well as he who has become the leader and orator of his party. And among the less cultivated but really intelligent yeomanry, nothing so stimulates to mental exertion as the informal gatherings in village and neighborhood, where the young and the old indulge in a free rehearsal of all they have ever seen, or heard, or felt. And what should we know of the mental capacity of loafers in the bar-room or workshop, but for their free discussions upon the politics, religion and good morals of the community. And how *could* the village gossip keep alive his brilliant thoughts, and render more vigorous his active mind, except by the daily

*recitation* of the mistakes and foibles of his erring neighbors? And even the man

———"Who never had a dozen thoughts

In all his life,       \*       \*       \*

———*told them o'er*, each in its 'customed place,  
From morn till night, from youth to hoary age."

But the relation of recitation to study is not its most important use, and for the reason that knowledge is not the end of education.

According to the popular theory, education is *filling up* the mind as one would fill up a cistern with water, or the stomach with food. If we wish to improve the condition of a *horse*, it is admitted that we should resort to the filling up process. The animal would be kept in a passive position and his stomach filled with nutritive fodder. And in the process of time, he would exhibit all the animation and beauty of Alexander's Bucephalus, as the result of careful training. But the human mind is not a *horse*.

Many a fond parent predicts that his son will become a great man because he is a great reader. He might expect him to *fatten* if he is a great eater, but knowledge does not improve

the mind in the same manner as food does the body. Still, many teachers insist that "education is storing the mind with useful knowledge." And why not add, to complete the figure, that physical education is storing the body with useful food ?

The ancients were trained for the athletic games, by vigorous and systematic exercise. This alone can give to the arm strength and dexterity ; to the vocal organs the power of expression in the production of harmonious sounds, and to the whole physical system that vigor, energy and skill necessary to accomplish the object of its creation. So the exercise of *thinking* and *reciting* gives the vigor and strength of intellectual manhood ; gives the power to acquire and use knowledge, and every other advantage of a practical education.

Recitation has, therefore, for its principal object the improvement of the faculties which it calls into exercise ; it creates the ability to give expression to ideas in conversation, writing, oratory and work. And that recitation which

is best adapted to give readiness, skill and power in the expression of thoughts, is equally fitted to promote earnest and accurate thinking.

But some ideas cannot be expressed in words—they require execution. Hence the importance of working examples, drawing diagrams and maps, performing experiments in the sciences and of practice in the arts. Still, language furnishes the chief means of expression, and, therefore, the cultivation of the “faculty of discourse” should be the main object of recitation.

But, as has been suggested, modern improvement has invented a labor-saving process in the cultivation of mind. The time seems too long and the labor too hard to our visionaries, for acquiring an education. They have marked the improvements of the age: the rearing of factories to manufacture our fabrics; the construction of engines to traverse the land and navigate the water; the making of machines to stitch our garments, to cut and thrash our grain, to write our letters and transmit our thoughts in the twinkling of an eye to the ends of the earth;

and hence they infer that there may be machines for cultivating mind and manufacturing thought. But all such views betray an alarming ignorance as to the nature and object of education.

The growing of trees in the forest requires as much time now as in the days of Plato. It still requires an hundred years, even in the fertile soil of young America, for the growth of a single oak to maturity. And the growth of mind must also be gradual; it must result from the same labor and toil that it cost the hardy old Greek who wrote the *Iliad*, centuries ago. "The path which leads to the mount of *science* does not lie among flowers; and he who travels it, must climb the cold hill-side; he must have his feet cut by the pointed rocks, he must faint in the dark valley, he must not seldom have his rest at midnight on the desert sand. It is no small thing for which the true *scholar* strives." The oak, that king of the forest which has braved the storms of a century, as we have intimated, grows as slowly now as when the earth was young. But the mushroom, now as then, grows



up in a *single night*. And may we not conclude, judging from our diluted literature and simplified text-books, from perverted public opinion and prevailing false theories, that this vegetable production, the mushroom, has been transplanted into our educational garden.

But would it not be better to make fewer books and more *men*? And if we would make men, we must lead our pupils to self-application and self-sacrifice. They must not be idle, passive listeners to oral instruction; they must *recite*, and not be examined.

“LABOR is life! ’Tis the still water faileth;  
Idleness ever despaireth, bewaileth;  
*Keep the watch wound*, for the dark rust assaileth;  
Flowers droop and die in the stillness of noon.”

The teacher cannot help the pupil recite, any more than he can help him study; he cannot study for him, any more than he can digest his dinner. The prevailing impression that teachers and text-books can do for the scholar the most of his studying and reciting, is both false and ruinous. In the simplified, popular text-books of our day, we find not only many useless expla-

nations to save labor in learning the lesson, but numerous questions to aid the pupil in reciting, and thus a strong temptation is held out to induce idleness or play rather than to encourage study. It must be, after all that has been said to the contrary, that "education is a royal road," and modern scholars prefer to ride rather than to walk. And even then, their course must be easy and rapid. We assure them that they are carried in the wrong direction, but their conveyance is very comfortable and seems to be taking them *somewhere very fast!* It is a serious fact that many of our teachers attach no importance to recitations as a means of discipline, but regard them merely as way marks to some imaginary goal. As a result, the pupils fail to appreciate the importance of recitation or study; they regard them as mere mechanical processes which seem necessary "to get through the book," "to complete the course," "to finish their education" and "to get a diploma."

The standard of scholarship and amount of study in the class, are ordinarily measured by

the thoroughness of the recitation and the actual requirements of the teacher. Pupils will do no more than necessary to perform the assigned task. If they know that the hour for recitation is to be occupied by a familiar lecture, they will be prepared to *hear* simply. If they expect to be examined by the use of questions, they will come to the recitation-room prepared for the *pumping process*. But let them know that they must recite their own lessons, and they will come prepared to do so, and will have the benefit of faithful study and accurate recitation.

Not one scholar in twenty, when he leaves the common school, knows how to study, and they are fortunate who acquire that habit in the early stages of their academic training. The fault is usually with the instructor and results not unfrequently, from a want of severity in requiring and conducting recitation. A stream does not rise higher than its fountain. If the teacher is superficial, the scholar will be so ; if he is accurate and severe, the whole tendency of his influence will be to create a love for study,

an interest and enthusiasm in the exercises of the school, and as a result, habits of close application. This is the first great object to be secured. When the scholar has gained the power to apply his mind closely and for a long time, to a single subject, he is half educated ; without this power, little or nothing can be accomplished. Let the instructor aim, therefore, to teach his pupils *how* to study.

But how shall we apply these suggestions to practical school-keeping, and what may we expect as results of the system of instruction here recommended ?

In making the application, we will first bring before their teacher, a class of mere children. They have come fresh from the studies and recitations of home-life. Timid and fearful, they are now to come under the restraints and discipline of school. The change is great and important, and the danger is that here their childish enthusiasm will be chilled, and their love of knowledge and habit of recitation destroyed. To overcome this timidity and make

them feel at home in their new position, the teacher should entertain them by pleasant and familiar conversation; to keep alive their interest in surrounding objects and passing events, and to cultivate still more their conversational powers, he should require them, at every recitation, to rehearse their little stories or to communicate interesting facts that have come under their own observation. Each should be provided with slate and pencil, so that his leisure hours may be occupied in drawing forms and figures under the direction of his instructor.

Children are not in school simply to learn their A B C's. [They are more often *sent* there, because they are troublesome at home!] But to learn to read is one object of the primary school, and it is very important that correct instruction be given to this class of children.

The "nature and power of letters" composing the alphabet, must first be understood; not by learning their names in the order in which they are arranged, but by selecting the more familiar

forms, such as can be made to mean something, and at once to interest the learner.

For instance, let the teacher draw upon the black-board the letter O, with a view to instruct his class as to the meaning and use of it. This letter is of the same form as the boy's hoop, or the girl's ring, and resembles also the shape of the mouth when it sounds O. Children sometimes speak it, when something hurts or pleases them, to express their feelings, but when not used alone, it represents a *sound* merely. Here let the class individually draw the letter upon the board or slate, and give and repeat its various sounds until its form and uses are completely understood. Next, let the letter I be drawn in the same way, and its form, use, nature and power be explained as before. I sounds like *eye*, but does not look like it, nor mean the same. I is used by the child speaking, to represent himself; *eye* is the organ to see with. I (or *i*, as sometimes written) when not used by itself, represents a sound. The children should now be required to write the character and give its

sounds until perfectly familiar with it. As a third example, S may be drawn. O is round, I is straight and S is crooked. Its peculiar form and sound should be made familiar to the children. In this way positive attainments are made, and the class are prepared for another step in their course, viz., the combination of letters into syllables.

S placed before I, gives SI; before O, gives SO; placed after, we have IS and OS. Here let all the sounds of these vowels be expressed and many times repeated by the class. This will not only give familiarity with the sounds and forms as items of useful knowledge, but also cultivate the vocal organs. It is *recitation*.

The next step in this process is to form syllables into words which express ideas. In doing this, the instructor should aim to select those words with which the children are most familiar, and the objects in which they are most interested. And with every recitation they should be required to give, in their own language, a description of these objects, their forms and uses. If the

names of animals constitute the lesson, let them describe their character, habits, etc. And to carry out this system of instruction and its application, we will suppose our class have made sufficient progress to read readily and understandingly. Now, at every lesson, the elementary principles should be reviewed and applied, and the habit of reciting continued. After a portion of the lesson has been read distinctly and correctly, the books should be closed and the members of the class called upon to recite what they have learned by reading. Whether it is a description or a story, the abstract should be expressed in their own language. In this way the mind will become the depository of thoughts, and the scholar will acquire the ability to use appropriate language in expressing them; school-life may thus be made pastime for children, and the school-room as attractive as their play-ground.

A recitation for mature pupils may here be illustrated by an example. A class of from ten to twenty, of equal capacity and standing, are



seated in the recitation-room. Each is called upon to recite, but not in the order in which they are seated. He rises and takes his position so as to address both teacher and class-mates, and in a clear and distinct voice, communicates in his own language, the ideas which he has acquired in the study of his lesson. The class give attention and are called upon to correct and improve the recitation of each. After this, the teacher asks questions, corrects mistakes and communicates additional information which all are expected to remember, as a part of the review for the following day. At the close of the hour, an appropriate merit mark is recorded, indicating each individual's standing as shown by that recitation.

The practical results of the system here recommended are evident. They are manifest at every step in the course of education and in every sphere of life.

The scholar under this kind of training, learns to become prompt and earnest in the discharge of his duties; his hard study and accurate

recitation, give strength and vigor of mind and a consciousness of manly independence ; his habit of criticism serves to form judgment, cultivate taste and give the power of fixed attention. And these are valuable attainments, equally important in every profession and employment. Another result of this system is the cultivation of the conversational powers. The constant habit of giving expression to thoughts, practiced from early childhood, gives a free and correct use of language, the power to clothe the conceptions in appropriate words and to utter them with fluency and elegance. This is a valuable accomplishment, but is rarely attained for the want of proper culture.

This system is equally adapted to form the ready writer. Every recitation is either an abstract or a composition, and the daily practice of rehearsing his own or the thoughts of others, is the most successful way for the scholar to acquire fluency in the use of his tongue or his pen. Let the lesson, the description and the story which constitute the recitation, be fre-

quently *written*; let this practice be continued through every stage of education, and the exercise of writing compositions will no longer be regarded as a task, and all our pupils will acquire this noble art, so important in practical life. And what so well calculated to make accurate observers and intelligent hearers and readers, as this practical training by study and recitation. Their minds become well disciplined and logical, and are under the control of an "iron will," and this will is directed by an earnest spirit. Such men are prepared not only to acquire knowledge, but to digest it and make it a part of their own mental being. They can analyze, classify and discriminate, and hence are prepared to reason, believe and act for themselves.

Once more, it is only by study and recitation that the public speaker can be trained to do honor to the pulpit or the forum. A man is not an orator because he is a sound scholar, nor because he has the power of declamation. The two must be combined in the same individual—

deep thought and elegant and earnest expression. The one is the result of faithful study, and the other of constant training from early boyhood, in the practice of *recitation*. Clay and Webster failed in their first attempts at public speaking, and even Demosthenes whom Cicero pronounced "the most perfect of all orators," was ridiculed when he first appeared before an Athenian audience. He had weak lungs, a shrill voice and defective enunciation. To overcome these obstacles he *recited* "with pebbles in his mouth" and upon the sea-shore, amid the noise of the roaring waves; he shut himself up "in a subterranean room" for months together, for the purpose of *reciting* "before a mirror," that he might acquire freedom of speech and dignity of manner, and "he transcribed the history of Thucydides eight times for the purpose of forming his style." By *study* and *recitation* these great men became the greatest orators of ancient and modern times. By the same process, others may also acquire power and distinction.

## VII.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS TO TEACHERS.

THUS, fellow teachers, we have aimed to redeem our promise and present to you very briefly, some practical "Hints" upon school-keeping. We trust you will appreciate our motives, with however little favor you may regard our efforts. All that is valuable for you as teachers, must be learned either from those "who have borne the heat and burden of the day," or from your own experience in the "wear and tear" of teaching. Mere theory and philosophy have no place in the management and instruction of schools. The teacher deals only with facts. He is eminently a practical man, and must take a practical, common-sense view of everything. Besides—

“Teacher! to thyself,  
Thou hast assumed responsibilities  
Of crushing weight. A mighty, peerless work,  
Is thine. The golden chords attun’d by thee,  
Or grown by thy neglect, discordant; not  
In time alone, but thro’ the limitless  
Expanse of all eternity, shall throb;  
And should one note, which thou, by greater care,  
More zealous labors, or by added skill,  
Might now attune in harmony, be found  
At last, in dissonance with virtue, truth,  
Or mental symmetry, in Heaven’s sight,  
Methinks a fearful guilt will on thee rest.  
Thou hast to do with God’s most noble work!  
The image fair, and likeness of Himself!  
Immortal mind. That emanation bright  
From His Divinity! Sole transfer made  
To man, from His own deathless nature! Such,  
Instructor, is thy trust! Thus sacred, high,  
And precious, e’en beyond all finite pow’r  
To estimate, thy holy charge! No work  
Of art, or finest mechanism in things  
Material, hath e’er so challenged, for  
Its right discharge, e’en the vast aggregate  
Of human skill.”

Look well, then, to your qualifications for the great work which you have undertaken. Have you as much common-sense, devotion to your work, cheerfulness and hope, natural sympathy with the young, aptness to teach, energy of character, mental power and cultivation, self-

respect, self-control and moral integrity as is necessary, to fit you for your important duties?

We need the noblest order of minds for this work. We need persons of ripe, extensive, thorough scholarship, persons of refined, elegant tastes, and high and commanding intellects; but they must be individuals of perfected power, who can communicate *themselves*, as well as their learning—individuals of profound impulses and burning sympathies, who have souls to move the world. There is an acknowledged want of this kind of personal power, in many of our teachers. They may exhibit no prominent defects either in character or attainments; may, indeed, be living editions of text-books, capable of patient elaborations and learned comments on the subjects before them, but they are destitute of all vital, transmissive, inspiring influence; no virtue goes out of them, as they mingle with their scholars; they never stir the deep fountains of their souls nor awaken in their bosoms those lofty sentiments that incite to greater efforts and nobler deeds. The teacher who

cannot rouse his pupils to think and act for themselves, who is satisfied to drag the almost lifeless body of an uninterested class through formal recitations, does not deserve the name he bears. No matter how great his abilities, or how extensive his learning, his main work is left undone. The high office of the teacher reaches far beyond the mere formalities of the school-room. "Where acquisition ends, the highest education begins;" hence, the paramount aim of the teacher should be to cultivate the faculties and cherish the spirit of a nobler life. If he possesses such a power, an unconscious tuition will be felt upon all around him; his spirit will have all the glow that imagination kindles, and will be filled with impulses more stirring than chivalry ever excited. Such a spirit will consecrate him to his work, and bear him through his labors as a glorious pastime.

Now, fellow teacher, the question is, have you these qualifications and this spirit? If you are conscious that you do not possess these qualities (in some degree at least), and have



not the power and determination to acquire them, you may safely conclude that you have mistaken your calling, and should at once relinquish it, to engage in some employment less responsible and more congenial to your habits and tastes :

“For woe to him who brings,  
Or ignorance or recklessness, to such  
Pursuit! Let him the rather dig, or beg  
From door to door, his daily food, and live  
At peace with God, and in His sight absolved,  
Than tamper with expanding mind; for if  
Unsightly mould, he doth perchance impart,  
No pow’r resides on earth, to e’er repair  
The seamless havoc he hath wrought. His work  
Howe’er achieved, whate’er its consequent,  
How done, is done for aye.”

If, however, you are conscious that you possess the requisite qualifications to enter upon such duties, let your aim be high. Determine to elevate and honor your profession. Let no opportunity for self-culture pass unimproved. No teacher has already attained to perfection; every one should strive still more to cultivate his mind and heart, and to gain general and professional knowledge. This should be the

work of every day of his life. Would you engage earnestly in this work of self-discipline, learn to make the most of *time*.

Great wealth is not usually acquired by "huge windfalls," but by minute and careful accumulations. The little sums which many would deem of no importance, the pennies and half-dollars, are the items which the miser has, year by year, collected and preserved, until he has reared his pyramid of fortune. From the miser's success, you may learn the nobler "avarice of time."

The German critic, who learned to repeat the *Iliad* in Greek, had no months, weeks nor days to spare from professional labor. He employed the *minutes* spent in passing from one patient's door to another, in his daily round of duty. Dr. Mason Good's translation of Lucretius was composed in the streets of London, under similar circumstances. Dr. Burney, the great musician, acquired the *French* and *Italian* languages while riding on horse-back, from place to place, to give his professional instructions. Elihu Burritt and Hugh Miller are also illustrious examples of

what may be accomplished by a proper use of time, amid the cares and labors of active life. You also should profit by such economy, and learn how to use fragments of time. You should "glean up its golden dust; those raspings and parings of precious duration, those leavings of days and remnants of hours which so many sweep out into the waste of existence," and employ them all in study and efforts to make yourselves better teachers.

To the same end, you should learn to be punctual. This is important, not only in your efforts for self-improvement, but also for your success in the management of your school. As a habit in life, punctuality is invaluable. Some always post their letters a few moments after the mail has closed; reach the wharf just in time to see the steamboat off, or the railroad depot just in season to hear the whistle of the engine, already thundering by. By such tardiness much time is lost and much inconvenience realized. So in school-life.

"A LITTLE TOO LATE," will produce evils that

industry and perseverance cannot remove ; will waste precious moments that no pains nor toil can recover. Be punctual, then, in every school-duty, and also in those personal duties that pertain to your own improvement.

Method and promptitude are also essential to your improvement and success. They will prevent confusion and irregularity. If you have no system, or delay until to-morrow what ought to be done to-day, a part of your necessary or desirable work will remain undone through the week, through the year, and through life. "A time and place for everything," should be written over your door, engraven on your memory, and wrought into your fixed habits. Then, school-duty will be pleasant, and will be so performed that much time will be saved for self-culture.

Again, we would urge upon you the importance of singleness of purpose, both as a means of success and a duty. We do not mean that you should be a "man of one idea," and know nothing beyond the limited sphere of your own profession ; but that teaching should be the one

great object before your mind, and that you should devote to it your best hours and your best thoughts, directly. Kindred subjects demand a certain degree of your attention, but only so far as they subserve to the same purpose. "Let your profession be contemplated under the similitude of a river, broad and deep, but as constituted of many lesser streams, by whose influence it has been formed, and is still fed." The River should engross your first attention, and all the smaller streams be so directed as to swell the main channel.

Professional enthusiasm is of two kinds; the one confines itself to the technicalities of the profession, rejecting every other species of discipline and knowledge as irrelevant or useless; the other seeks the fountains from which the tributaries flow, and aims to turn everything into the deep channel and to guide even the remotest streams of knowledge into the swelling current. If you fully appreciate the greatness of the work you have undertaken, you cannot be diverted from your noble purpose, however

wide your range of study and observation. Happy indeed, if pure science and hard study have trained your mind to close and vigorous thought—happy if the material world has enlarged your soul by her lofty contemplations—happy if the classics have strengthened your reasoning powers and cultivated your taste—happy if the Muses have warmed and exalted your imagination and lifted your thoughts to the beautiful and sublime in Nature and Art.

Then will you be able to draw from these ample stores, means to embellish your work and honor your profession.

Finally, enter upon your duties with a full conviction of their importance and of your own individual responsibility. To become an accomplished teacher, is in itself, a purpose worthy of your highest and noblest ambition. You must cherish this feeling, or you can have no motive to put forth suitable efforts to attain the end you have in view.

The community is yet ungrateful and insensible to the importance of your service ; hence

they offer you but a meager compensation, and give you but little encouragement. Still it is true that you “stand in the highest and best place that God has ordained to man.” It is yours “to form a human soul to virtue, and to enrich it with knowledge—an office inferior only to creating power.” You stand on holy ground!

“O, then, be wise!

Be every measure of thy choice, to aid  
In forming deathless intellect, the fruit  
Of earnest study, and of zealous care;  
E’en looking to the boundless future of  
Its destiny. Thou may’st be popular,  
Perchance, but seek not popularity  
As motive-spring of any act, in thy  
Profession. Valiant be, and ever dare  
To do the right, tho’ all the gathered hosts  
Of error may oppose. Then, if thou fail  
On Earth thy well-earned measure of applause  
To gain, that nobler tribute from the skies,  
‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant,’ shall  
Thy glorious mission crown.”

## VIII.

### OUR COMMON SCHOOLS.

TO PARENTS.

THE education of a young Prince or Princess is regarded in royal governments, as an important matter, affecting, as it must, the welfare of nations. The selection of a proper tutor for such an heir to the throne, always excites a deep interest and solicitude throughout the kingdom or empire.

But we are a *Nation of Sovereigns, and our children all princes of a future generation*. Yet, with how little comparative solicitude, do parents and teachers in our community, enter upon the great work of Education. How little interest is felt in the character and success of our Common Schools. How small the capital invested in school-houses, apparatus, books and *teachers*, (if we may judge by the amount paid



for their services.) And do parents expect a liberal income from this investment? Would they expect it in any other department of labor or trade, under similar circumstances? Suppose the mechanic, the farmer, or the merchant should invest so meagerly, as a means of carrying on his business, what but a disgraceful failure would be the result? Yet there is no investment that pays so well as the necessary expense of a first class district school; a spacious, convenient and tasteful house, a good apparatus and suitable books, and a well qualified, efficient and *expensive* (because well qualified) teacher. As a mere matter of dollars and cents, we repeat it, *no investment pays so well.*

Railroad and Bank stock is often *below par*. Manual and mechanical labor may, for various reasons, fail of their reward. But intellectual and moral culture, a sound and practical education for our children, is always available; is a better security against future want, *than any amount of money can be.*

The great object which every parent professes to have in view is the welfare of his children. He spends toilsome days and sleepless nights for their support, protection and happiness while yet under the paternal roof. And the source of his solicitude in regard to their riper years, is that they may be well provided for and "well started in the world." But how often do parents misjudge in this important matter, and as a consequence, not only waste their own energies but ruin their children. The choice usually lays between the accumulation of wealth on the one hand, and the education of their children on the other, and in a majority of cases, their early education is neglected for the sake of saving money. To prove this, we have only to refer to our common schools, as they are. How poor and ill-adapted our school-houses; how destitute of suitable apparatus and books, as above suggested; how *cheap* many of the teachers employed. The reason assigned is that "the district is too poor to provide better." Still these parents have erected comfortable houses and splendid

barns ; have employed the most efficient help on their farms, and purchased the best implements of husbandry in the market. They are not too poor to provide well for their *animals* and the successful prosecution of their business, but too poor *to educate their children!* Now, it can be demonstrated that any family of children left in the world with no inheritance but a good character and a thorough education, are infinitely safer and more sure of an honorable livelihood, than with a fortune without the advantages of education. How often the wealth accumulated by the industry, self-denial and toil of a miserly father, who could not *afford* to educate his children, has been squandered by his ignorant and dissipated sons. And how numerous the instances where children, reared in poverty but educated by the labor and self-denial of anxious parents, have risen, unaided, to stations of honor and affluence.

Not only so, but these very children have come up to give their honored parents a liberal support, and to comfort them in their declining

years. These parents had "cast their bread upon the waters, and found it again after many days." Such results are legitimate. Wealth with ignorance is always a curse to the young ; poverty with education, always a blessing.

Every considerate parent will therefore, make the first and most liberal outlay for the education of his children in the common school. He will not be satisfied until the school is provided with every facility for the greatest improvement and most thorough discipline.

But the necessary expense of a *good* district school is a profitable investment, not only in view of the results upon the future welfare of our children, but in view of the increased value given to real estate, in any community. Wherever the condition of our schools is improved, there, and in the same proportion, is the value of property increased. What is a good farm worth in Sodom? Yet, the education of our children, in the proper sense of that term, is all that can prevent any district or neighborhood from becoming a Sodom. How then, is it pos-

sible for parents to manifest so little interest in the welfare of their schools? Why bestow so little care upon the selection of teachers? Why take so little interest in the school while in operation?

The utmost caution should be exercised in the selection of the person to fill this high office, but when once employed, the good of the school requires that he should receive the encouragement and coöperation of the whole district. He may not prove to be as efficient as would be desirable, still he must be sustained. As long as he is allowed to hold the office of teacher, parents have no right to take sides against him. The influence of such opposition is always destructive of good order, and tends to foster a spirit of rebellion in the school. Better sustain an unworthy teacher than encourage insubordination; if he is to be dismissed, let it be done by the parents, and not by the pupils.

But if parents would coöperate with their teacher and secure to their children the benefits of a good school, they must feel and manifest a

deep interest in its success. The indifference of parents has chilled the enthusiasm and blasted the hopes of many an earnest teacher. When he entered the district his heart was warm and his hands strong for the important work assigned him; but he found no sympathy, met with no encouragement, and received little or no attention from his patrons. The children imbibed the same spirit at home, and brought it to the school-room. Compelled to toil on alone and amid such discouragements, he gave up in despair, when, with suitable encouragement, he might have been successful.

Parents should always have a mutual understanding with their teacher. To this end, they should form an early and intimate acquaintance with him. And while he reveals to them his views and plans for the management and instruction of his school, they should give assurances of their willingness and determination to aid him in carrying out his measures. They should frequently visit his school. This habit cannot fail to have a favorable influence both upon the

teacher and the pupils. If the practice should become general in our community, the change would mark a new era in the history of common school education, and result in untold good. Not only are teachers quickened to activity and faithfulness and pupils to diligence by such visits, but parents are enabled to gain more correct views of the progress of their children, and the efficiency of their instructor.

It is the duty of parents, also, cheerfully to furnish all *necessary* books and apparatus—not under the direction of interested book agents, but when the good of the school requires it. All scholars of the same standing must have uniform books in order to be properly classified, and sometimes the old should give place to the new and improved books, for the entire class. It is admitted, however, that uniformity is more important than change. Apparatus is needed to aid in the explanation of principles and facts; good books, black-boards, maps, globes, cube-blocks, et cætera, are the tools for our “artist,” and he should not be required to work without them.

Again, parents should not indulge their children in irregular attendance, or withdraw them temporarily from the school, except in cases of absolute necessity. Such irregularity is disheartening to the teacher, and injurious both to the school and the individual scholar; it tends to destroy his interest in the school and his ability to retain an honorable standing in his classes. It is the manifest duty of every parent, therefore, to insist upon punctuality in attendance and promptness in the discharge of every school duty.

Once more, we may remark, parents should never publicly censure the teacher for *supposed* faults. Too often has he been tried, condemned and executed without a hearing. A rebel chastised in school, has told his grievances to indulgent parents at home; they believe his exaggerated story, manifest their sympathy, and, without stopping to learn the facts in the case, pass judgment against the teacher. Now the offended parties proceed to excite prejudice, and create feeling in the school and



district in view of this fancied outrage, until half the neighborhood are in open rebellion against a faithful master, whose only fault is that he did not *crush* the offender while in his power. But such sympathy and opposition are all wrong ; unjust to the teacher, injurious to the child and ruinous to the school. The teacher has a right, in all cases, to demand a fair trial before condemnation, and it is his duty to maintain supremacy over his school, at all hazards and by whatever means necessary. If the pupil or parent can rightfully interfere, the teacher's office is divested of its power and the school of its utility.

Let parents consider well the toils and hardships of the true teacher, and learn to coöperate and sympathize with him ; let them pay him a fair compensation for his valuable services, and render him all needed encouragement and aid ; then may they hope to secure for themselves, their children and their country, the lasting benefits of a thorough Common School Education.

## TO PUPILS.

THE children and youth in our families and common schools, have also a deep interest in our subject. Indeed, the good that may be accomplished by our educational system as it is, and the desirable improvements that should be made, depend very much upon the pupils themselves. The best teacher in the nation, and the best school-house, and the best books, will not, necessarily, make good scholars or secure the desirable advantages of a good school. Those pupils who choose to remain ignorant, and become vicious in spite of instruction, may always succeed. If, on the other hand, there is a full determination to learn, and a consciousness of individual responsibility, scholars will improve with limited advantages and little instruction, or with no instruction at all. How many of the great and good men of our country have reached the high places of honor and usefulness, with even less advantages than the pupils in our common schools at present enjoy. When young,

they felt the importance of self-reliance and perseverance, which alone can insure improvement and give success under any circumstances. By industry, economy and laborious effort, they surmounted every obstacle and gained the desired object. Whether the school shall be good or bad, depends as much upon the scholars as the teacher. It must follow, therefore, that there are mutual and reciprocal duties to be performed. Not a child nor a youth attends our Summer or Winter schools who is not, in a measure responsible for the good or bad results of the teacher's efforts; who has not power to aid in improving and elevating the school, or in rendering it worse than useless. The pupils have not to perform the duties of the teacher or parents, but those peculiar to their own sphere and within the reach of their own ability.

How then, shall they be qualified to act their part? We answer—first, they must improve all their time and opportunities to the best advantage. The *minutes* gathered up from the strand of youth, are indeed the *golden* sands in

the hour-glass of life. Will our pupils allow them to run out in indolence or folly? If so, manhood will become a barren waste, or a frightful desert. This is true when applied to intellectual improvement. With diligence and perseverance, any youth in our common schools may become a good scholar; may acquire a substantial, thorough education, sufficient for all the ordinary pursuits of life. All should aim, while yet in the primary school, to become good readers, writers and accountants, and to acquaint themselves with the Constitution of their country and the laws of their moral being. If schoolhouses are poor and books ill-adapted; if teachers are inefficient and parents indifferent, *pupils* should feel more interest and put forth greater efforts; should resolve to overcome all these obstacles and become men and women worthy of the age and country in which they live.

It is important, also, that the youth in our schools, should realize the danger of bad habits. Many suppose that it is brave and manly to disregard the authority of parents and teachers;

to indulge in roguery, dishonesty and profanity. But all such should remember that the false, vulgar, wicked boy, is on the direct way to a useless, vicious manhood, and a miserable old age. Every act, thought and feeling of childhood and youth, has an influence in determining what manhood shall be. School-life for the pupil, is emphatically a preparation for the future ; the seed-time whose harvest will be "wheat" or "tares," joy or sorrow, according to the seed which is sown. Pupils should act from principle, and always dare to do right. A true spirit consists in following the dictates of a noble nature, and he alone is a coward who can be shamed out of his principles.

And let it not be forgotten that it is the teacher's business to govern and the scholar's duty to obey. The relations they sustain to each other make this necessary, and all well disposed scholars will aim to comply exactly with the regulations of school. The interests of both teacher and pupils are the same. The true teacher labors and lives only for those committed

to his care ; his honor is in their progress, and his happiness in their highest good. Those who disturb his plans or hinder his success, therefore, triumph in their own defeat and glory in their own shame.

Our common schools should be the *best* schools in the town, county and state. To secure this object, not only must good school-houses be provided, well qualified teachers employed, and a deep interest felt by parents in the welfare and improvement of the school, but pupils must be docile and obedient—prompt, punctual and faithful in the discharge of all their duties. Then we should find in our families and community, better sons and daughters, kinder brothers and sisters, truer friends, nobler patriots, more virtuous, more devoted, more faithful servants of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

## TESTIMONIALS.

---

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.—This may certify that I have read with much interest and satisfaction, a book entitled “Hints to Common School Teachers, Parents and Pupils; or Gleanings from School-Life Experience,” by Hiram Orcutt, A. M., Principal of the North Granville Ladies’ Seminary, N. Y. It is the production of a successful teacher, of long experience. I regard it a most excellent work, far exceeding anything of the kind which I have seen. The true methods of management, discipline and instruction of common schools, are clearly pointed out and the duties of parents and pupils well defined. The book is just what its author designed to make it,—cheap, suggestive and practical, and hence very valuable for every teacher, school committee and parent in the nation.

BENJ. GREENLEAF,

*Late Principal of the Bradford (Mass.) Academy, and Author of a popular series of Mathematical Works.*

Bradford, Mass., August, 1858.

---

I believe Mr. Orcutt’s “Gleanings from School-Life Experience” are just what the inexperienced teacher needs to forewarn him of danger, and to prepare him to encounter successfully the trials of the school-room. The book is also so cheap that every teacher can afford to buy it; so small that he can easily read it through; and so perspicuous and practical that he cannot fail to profit by the perusal.

LEONARD TENNEY,

*Late School Commissioner in New Hampshire.*  
Thetford, August, 1858.

## TESTIMONIALS.

NORMAL INSTITUTE, Royalton, Vt., Sept. 1858.

HIRAM ORCUTT, A. M., Dear Sir:—The “Gleanings” have come. I am delighted with it. First of all, I am right glad that you have had the moral courage to write and publish a small work.

In these days when every man must write his book, whether he knows anything or thinks anything or not, and that too, a duodécimo of four hundred pages, it is really refreshing to get a little book from a man who has something to say, and dares say it and stop. There is a touch of the heroic and an added smack of classical antiquity in it that greatly prepossess one.

The subjects of the book are the best and weightiest possible, and presented in the highest moods of your own felicitous style. *It is a frame work of iron, all full of the breath of life, on which he who reads attentively can hardly fail to build a structure honorable to himself and his profession.* I have introduced the book to my teachers class; it evidently pleases them, and I shall be much disappointed if it does not profit them equally. Yours with respect,

E. CONANT, *Principal.*

---

Extracts from a letter received from Prof. GEORGE W. GARDNER, Principal of New London Institution, and School Commissioner, New London, N. H.

“I thank you for the sheets of your forthcoming work. I have read them with some care. It will do good. I am glad to hear you *speak out* about some things, which ought to meet stern rebuke. The chapter on ‘Study and Recitation’ is one of great interest to me, treating, as it does, of some things not often touched upon. Your remarks upon the ‘Lecture System’ are just. I have seen it out and out, and am ready to pronounce against it, as means of *educating*, \* \* \* I am persuaded, as a general thing, *teachers talk too much and require pupils to talk too little.*”



## TESTIMONIALS.

"I have read with great pleasure the closing chapters sent me since writing the above. I am more than ever convinced that it will be a good book and supply an important place in the Common School Teacher's wants."

---

CHICAGO, Feb. 28, 1859.

HIRAM ORCUTT, ESQ., Principal of North Granville Ladies' Seminary:

DEAR SIR:—I have examined with much satisfaction the successive sheets of your "Gleanings from School-Life Experience," and take pleasure in commending the work to the favorable regard of Teachers and other friends of Education. The views it presents are sound and practical. If works of this character were more studied by Teachers, our schools would be greatly benefited. Yours, very truly,

W. H. WELLS.

*Supt. Chicago Public Schools and author of a popular English Grammar.*

---

BOSTON, Feb. 27, 1859.

Prof. HIRAM ORCUTT — My Dear Sir:—I have read the proof sheets of your admirable little volume entitled "Gleanings from School-Life Experience," which you had the kindness to forward to me, with pleasure as well as profit. I consider it a valuable contribution to the educational literature of the day, and should be glad to see it widely circulated among Teachers and Parents. I rejoice to learn that its merits have been so well appreciated as to make it necessary for the publishers so soon to issue a second edition.

I shall take great pleasure in commending it to the attention of persons connected with the instruction or supervision of schools, confident that I shall thus promote the interests of sound Christian education. I remain very truly yours,

JOHN D. PHILBRICK,

*Supt. Boston Public Schools.*













LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 021 363 633 9